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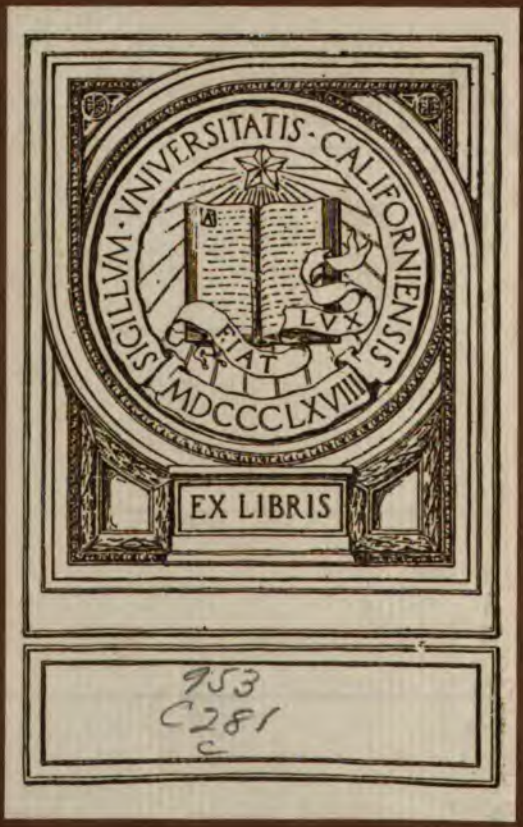
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CITY BALLADS

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CALIFORNIA

"THESE ARE THE SPIRES THAT WERE GLEAMING."

CITY BALLADS

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

WILL CARLETON

AUTHOR OF "FARM BALLADS" "FARM LEGENDS" "FARM FESTIVALS"
"YOUNG FOLKS' CENTENNIAL RHYMES" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

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TO

ADÓRA

FRIEND, COMRADE, LOVER, WIFE

775695

PREFACE.

When city people go among forests and hills, they drink in the fresh air and weird scenery of rural surroundings, with much more relish, enjoyment, and appreciation, than do the life-long residents they find there.

For the same reason, the great drama of metropolitan existence falls most forcibly upon those just from the clear streams and green meadows of the country. Their impressions then are deeper, and their feelings more intense than if they were city born and bred.

With the latter fact in view, this book is an effort to reproduce some of the effects of city scenes and character upon the intellect and imagination of two people from the country:

First, a young student, who has travelled the well-beaten roads of a college course, but is just entering real life, and now for the first time walks the paved and palace-bordered streets of which he has heard and read so much.

Second, an old farmer, with very little "book-learning," but a clear brain, a warm heart, and independent judgment, and a habit of philosophizing upon everything he sees, which habit he brings to the city, and applies to the strange facts he witnesses.

These, with certain incidental thoughts and characters encountered and discussed, constitute the present work. It will be found, as intended, sketchy and suggestive rather than elaborate and complete. Note-books and diaries are designed, not so much for the history of a career or an event, as a light to the memory, a stimulus to the imagination, and a help to the heart.

It is the hope of the author that his book may perform those offices for you, his readers, and that it will rouse your pity of pain, your enjoyment of honest mirth, your hatred of sham and wrong, and your love and adoration of the Resolute and the Good, and their winsome child, the Beautiful.

In which case he shakes hands with his large and loved constituency, and continues happy.

W. C.

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CITY BALLADS.

Univ. of California

WEALTH.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

HERE in The City I ponder,
Through its long pathways I wander.
These are the spires that were gleaming
All through my juvenile dreaming.
This is The Something I heard, far away,
When, at the close of a tired Summer day,
Resting from work on the lap of a lawn,
Gazing to whither The Sun-god had gone,
Leaving behind him his mantles of gold—
This is The Something by which I was told:
"Bend your head, dreamer, and listen—
Come to my splendors that glisten!
Either to triumph they call you,
Or to what worst could befall you!"
This is The Something that thrilled my desires,
When the weird Morning had kindled his fires,
And the gray city of clouds in the east
Lighted its streets as for pageant or feast,
Whisp'ring—my spirit elating—
"Come to me, boy, I am waiting!
Bring me your muscle and spirit and brain—
Here to my glory-strewn, ruin-strewn plain!"

Treading the trough of the furrow,
Digging where life-rootlets burrow,
Blade of the food-harvest swinging,
In the barns toiling and singing,
Breath of a hay-meadow smelling,
Forest-trees loving and felling—
Where'er my spirit was turning,
Lived that mysterious yearning!
When in the old country school-house I conned
Legends of life in the broad world beyond—
When in the trim hamlet-college I cast
Wondering glances at days that were past—
Ever I longed for the walls and the streets,
And the rich conflict that energy meets!

So I have come: but The City is great.
Bearing me down like a brute with its weight.
So I have come: but The City is cold,
And I am lonelier now than of old.

Yet, 'tis the same restless story:
Even to fail here were glory!
Grand, to be part of this ocean
Of matter and mind and emotion!
Here flow the streams of endeavor,
Cityward trending forever.—
Wheat-stalks that tassel the field,
Harvests of opulent yield,
Grass-blades that fence with each other,
Flower-blossoms—sister and brother—
Roots that are sturdy and tender,
Stalks in your thrift and your splendor,
Mind that is fertile and daring,
Face that true beauty is wearing—

All that is strongest and fleetest,
All that are dainty and sweetest.
Look to the domes and the glittering spires,
Waiting for you with majestic desires!
List to The City's gaunt, thunderous roar,
Calling and calling for you evermore!
Long in the fields you may labor and wait—
You and your tribe may come early or late;
Beauty and excellence dwell and will dwell
Oft amid garden and moorland and fell;
Long generations may hold them,
Centuries oft can enfold them;
But the rich City's they some time shall be,
Sure as the spring is the food of the sea.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

SEPTEMBER 20, 18—.

Wind in the south-west; weather wondrous fine;
Thermometer 'twixt seventy-eight and nine.
Ground rather dry; sun flails us over-warm;
It's most time for the equinoctial storm.
Family healthy as could be desired;
Except we're somewhat mind and body tired
At moving over such a lengthy road,
And settling down here in our town abode,
And wrestling with the pains that filter through one
When he gives up an old home for a new one.

Old Calendar, you've always stood me true;
Now I'll change works, and do the same by you!
You're just as good as when, with aching arm,
I cleared and worked that eighty-acre farm!
And every night, in those hard, dear old days,
'Twas one of my most unconditional ways,
When to my labors I had said Good-night,
And recompensed my home-made appetite,

And talked with Wife, and traded family views,
And gathered all the latest township news,
And dealt my sons a sly fraternal hit,
And flirted with my daughters just a bit,
And through the papers tried my way to see,
So the world shouldn't slip out from under me,
As I was saying—in those sweet old days,
'Twas one of my most unconditional ways,
To go to you, old book, before I'd sleep,
And hand you over all the day to keep.

I gave you up what weather I could find,
Likewise the different phases of my mind;
What my hard hands from morn to night had done,
And what my mind had been subsisting on;
What accidents had touched my brain with doubt,
And what successes it had whittled out;
How well I had been able to control
The weather fluctuations of my soul;
What progress or what failures I had made
In spying round and stealing Nature's trade;
The seeds of actions planted long ago,
And whether they had blossomed out or no;
And oft, from what you of the past could tell,
I've learned to steer my future pretty well.

And now I'M RICH (who ever thought 'twould be!)
I'll stand by you, as you have stood by me;
And now I'm "City people"—having moved
(My circumstances suddenly improved)
Into this town, with some quick-gotten pelf,
To educate my children and myself,
And give my wife, who has a pedigree,
A chance to flutter round her family tree,
And show her natural city airs and graces
(Which didn't "take" quite so well in country places) –
Now we are here, old fellow, while we stay
I'll give you all the news from day to day.

I'll find the good that in this city lurks,
By regular, systematic, hard days' works;
I'll rummage fearless round amongst the harm,
As when I hoed up thistles on my farm;
Shake hands with Virtue, help Sin while I spurn it,
And if there's anything to learn, I'll learn it.

How little I suspected, by the way—
Scrambling for pennies in that patch of clay,
The bare expenses of our lives to meet—
That waves of wealth were washing at my feet!
And when my hard and rather lazy soil
Sprung a leak upward with petroleum-oil—
When, through the wonder in my glad old eyes,
I saw tall derricks by the hundred rise,
Flinging wealth at me with unceasing hand,
And turning to a mine my hard old land,
Until it seemed as if the spell would hold
Till every blade of grass was turned to gold—
I felt, as never yet had come to me,
How little round the curves of life we see;
Or, in our rushings on, suspect or view
What sort of stations we are coming to!
It brought a similar twinge—though not so bad—
As once, when losing every cent I had.

But still it could not shift my general views;
My mind didn't faint at one good piece of news.
I think I'd too much ballast 'neath my sail
To be capsized by one good prosperous gale
(Same as I didn't lie down and give up all
That other time, when tipped up by a squall).
I didn't go spreeing for my money's sake,
Or with my business matters lie awake;
'Twould never do, as I informed my wife,
To let a little money spoil our life!

And now I'm rich (who ever thought 'twould be!)
I'll look about, and see what I can see;

Appoint myself a visiting committee,
With power to act in all parts of the city;
Growl when I must, commend whene'er I can,
And lose no chance to help my fellow-man.
For he who joy on others' paths has thrown,
Will find there's some left over for his own;
And he who leads his brother toward the sky,
Will in the journey bring himself more nigh.

And what I see and think, in my own way,
I'll tell to you, Old Calendar, each day;
And if I choose to do the same in rhyme,
What jury would convict me of a crime?
For every one, from palaces to attics,
Has caught, some time or other, *The Rhythmatics.*

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Still through The City I ponder,
Still do I wonder and wander.
City—unconscious descendant
Of olden-time cities resplendent!
Child of rich forefathers hoary,
Clad in their gloom and their glory!—
Dream I of you in the rich, mellow past,
Throbbing with life, and with Death overcast.

Thebes—not to you, crushed and ghastly and dumb,
Even the wreck-loving Ivy will come!
Where stood your hundred broad, world-famous gates,
Now a black Arab for charity waits.
Not like this City—metropolis bold—
Where the whole world brings its goods and its gold!

Babylon—here the queen's gardens climbed high,
Painting their flowers on the blue of the sky:

"I SAW TALL DERRICKS BY THE HUNDRED RISE."

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This is where sinners, one asinine hour,
Thought they could travel to Heaven by tower.
(How like some sinners to-day, whose desires
Mount by the way of their greed-builded spires!)

Troy—of rare riches and valor possessed,
Ruined fore'er by one beautiful guest—
(Here many Helens, though less of renown,
Do for some men what she did for a town!)

Wondrous Palmyra, whose island of green,
'Mid the bleak sand, reared the beautiful queen
(Sweet-faced Zenobia, peerless
Proud in her virtue, and fearless)
In this metropolis, virtuously grand,
Many a queen is a joy to the land!

Tyre—the huge pillars that groaned under thee,
Rest in the depths of a desolate sea;
Long may it be ere the spray's salted showers
Foam o'er the walls of this city of ours!

Mound-men's vast cities, whose graves we accost,
Even your names are in ruins—and lost.
What if, some time when this nation is nought,
Vainly our names in our graves should be sought!

Cities that yet are to flourish,
That the rich Future must nourish!
Where will you take up your stations—
Where set your massive foundations?
Where are the slumbering meadows,
Dreaming of clouds through their shadows,
That by rough wheels rudely shaken,
Into new life shall awaken?
Harbors that placidly float
Nought but the fisherman's boat,

Think you of fleets that shall lie
Under the blue of your sky;
When shall be built on your land
Palaces wealthily grand;
When in your face from tall spires
Gleam the electrical fires?
Cities that yet are to be,
You are not phantoms to me!
You are as certain and sure
As that Old Time shall endure.

Stars in the distant, mysterious sky,
Flashing and flaming and dancing on high,
Each is an earth to its millions,
Each has its domes and pavilions.
Cities, I see you—by reasoning led—
On the great map with blue leaves overhead.
Seaport and lakeport and rich inland town,
Capital city, and village of brown;
Thanking the prairie-food-givers,
Strung on the winding star-rivers.
Earths that can signal to earths, every one,
With the bright torches you stole from the sun,
Each on its surface has strown
Cities and towns of its own,
Fraught with their crimes and their graces,
Full of mysterious places.
They are no myths unto me—
Clearly their outlines I see;
Millions of towns I descry
Hanging o'er me from the sky.

Still through the paths of the town,
Dreaming, I walk up and down.

Is it so much of a wonder—
Part of this whole, yet asunder,
I in this throng, and I only—
That I am wretched and lonely?
Loneliness—loneliness ever—
Leaving me utterly, never!
Yes, I am part of this ocean
Of matter and mind and emotion;
Yet how entirely apart,
Severed in mind and in heart!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

SEPTEMBER 25, 18—.

Wealth—wealth—wealth—wealth! I never had been led,
From all I'd thought and dreamed and heard and read,
To think so much wealth, in whatever while,
Could be raked up into one shining pile!
Not long ago, a hundred dollars clear,
Big as a hay-stack would to me appear.
When first a thousand dollars made me smile,
I sympathized with Crœsus quite a while;
But looking round here makes me feel the same
As if I hadn't a nickel to my name!

Wealth—wealth! why, every acre I behold
Has cost a mine of Californi' gold!
The very ground one building here might fill
Would almost buy the town of Tompkins Hill!

There isn't a house my scrutiny has crossed
But catches several figures in its cost;
And when your eyes into the parlor go
('Mongst things they leave the curtains up to show).
And see the carpets, rugs, and draperies rich,
That twine ten dollars into every stitch,

And view great pictures that such prices hold
As if the painter's brush were dipped in gold;

And when along the roads great buggies glide,
With covers on, and rich-dressed folks inside,
And up on top a man to drive the team—
As fat as any cat brought up on cream
(Man and team both), the driver dressed as gay
As if he meant to marry that same day,
Or wed his boss's daughter that same night
(Which some consider as the coachman's right,
And think it's understood, when he engages,
A daughter should be thrown in with his wages),
When even the horses, as so many do,
Wear jewelry that cost a farm or two,
You wonder in what tree-top grew the cash
To buy so much reality and trash!

Wealth—wealth—wealth—wealth! the very corner stores
Are gold-mines from the ceilings to the floors!
The shop we thought would ruin Cousin Phil,
Because 'twas over-large for Tompkins Hill,
Would, in the small vest-pocket, lose its way,
Of one man's place I wandered through to-day!

And then the banks—a hundred on one street—
As full of money as an egg of meat
(Although one never knows beyond a doubt
What colored chickens they'll be hatching out);

And then the churches—elegant to view—
An independent fortune in each pew.
One window-pane in one big church that's here
Cost more than our old preacher made per year!
(A city pastor's salary, I declare,
Would keep *him* all his life, with cash to spare,
A-preaching in that little house of wood,
Holding his hearers' eyes in all he could,

With rolling meadows and green trees in view,
And fresh-complexioned streamlets wandering through);

And then the rich school-houses in this town,
Where children can be taught up-stairs and down,
Swifter (if not so thorough), I suppose,
Than in the small log school-house, where I rose
From Numeration to the Rule of Three,
And had Irregular Verbs whipped into me;

And then the railroad stations, where, each day,
Fortunes on wheels rush in and drive away;
And then the steamboats paddling up and down—
Towns swimming on their way from town to town;

And then the ladies, in both street and store,
Done up in silks and satins, spangled o'er
As if it had rained diamonds for an hour,
And they had gone and stood out in the shower;

And then the rich and idle-houred young men—
The rising generation's "Upper 10"
(With the "1" left off), who each day, no doubt,
Spend twice as much as all my "setting out,"
When Father said, "The family craft is full;
Launch your own craft and show us how to pull."

I often think, when past a dandy glides,
Throwing his (father's) money on all sides,
And peeking under each young lady's veil,
As if he'd bought her at a mortgage sale,
How shrewd it was of him, right on the start,
To have a father who was rich and smart!
(Folks often pride themselves much, by-the-way,
Because their parents greater were than they.)

Walking to-day along Fifth Avenue,
A slip of paper on the sidewalk flew

Before my eyes—some one the same had dropped;
I reached my hand down for it and it stopped.
I picked it up—the reading on't was queer;
I think, perhaps, I'll paste it right in here.

THE LOVELY YOUNG MAN.

Oh the elements varied—the exquisite plan—
That are used in constructing the lovely young man!
His face he has easily made to possess
The expression of nothing within to express;
His hair is oiled glossily back of his ears,
Atop of his head an equator appears;
His scanty mustache has symmetrical bends,
Is groomed with precision, and waxed at both ends;
His darling complexion, bewitching to see,
Is powdered the same as a lady's might be.
And this is the dear whom the newspapers rude
Have scornfully treated, and christened the ——.

The mental equipment I'll tell, if I can,
That Nature has given the lovely young man:
A set of emotions consistently weak,
To go with a creature so gentle and meek;
A will no opposing can break or surmount
(Concerning all matters of no great account);
A reasoning wheel, quite correctly revolved
(When used on small questions already resolved);
A taste for each gaudy and glistening thing
That grows on the vision and dies on the wing.
Elaborate methods and principles crude
Encompass the mental estate of the ——.

The outer habiliments hastily scan,
Employed in adorning the lovely young man!
His feet two triangular cases have sought,
By which his five toes to a focus are brought;

"I REACHED MY HAND DOWN FOR IT AND IT STOPPED."

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The sheathes that enfold his propellers within
Are on the most intimate terms with his skin;
His starch-tortured collar on tip-toe appears,
Desirous of learning the length of his ears;
And fifteen-sixteenths of his brain, very nigh,
Has run all to blossom and stopped in his tie.
Such some of the splendors mad Fashion has strewed
All over the surface comprising the ——.

Oh measure the brief philological span
Of the high-pressure words of the lovely young man!—
"B' Jauve! you daun't sayh saw! youah playing it low!
Aw, auyn't she a daisy! I knaw her, y' knaw.
She's thweet on me, somehow, though why I dawn't say,
It cawn't be my beauty, it must be my *way!*
Did you notith, laust night, Chawley Johnson's neck-tie?
It paralyzed me, and I thought I should d-i-e!
He's quite a sound fellaw to talk to awhile;
It's weally a pity he isn't our style!"
And thus talks forever, with slight interlude,
The creature that lately was christened a ——.

Oh boys! there are several hundreds of ways
To make yourselves small to the average gaze;
Of which some will cost you considerably less,
Accomplishing nearly an equal success.
Go purchase a gilded hand-organ some day,
And stand on the corner and solemnly play;
Envelop yourselves in the skin of an ape,
Assuming his methods as well as his shape;
Submit to refined zoological charms,
And carry a lap-dog about in your arms;
But *don't* let Destruction upon you intrude,
So far as to make you down into a ——.

I think I saw, a minute's half or less,
The young girl who composed this spiteful mess;

She watched me pick it up, made a half rush
Toward me, and then retreated with a blush.
I called, before she vanished from my vision,
"My dear, I think you've lost your composition!"
But she dodged off, as if she seemed to doubt it,
And, I suppose, went on to school without it.

Pacing the question over, far and near,
I think the little maid was too severe.
Sweet Charity can roof much sin, they tell,
Why shouldn't it shelter foolishness as well?
When we draw rein and look about a minute,
We see no field but God is somewhere in it;
He made the eagle and the lion, I've heard;
Why not the monkey and the chipping-bird?

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Pavement and window and wall—
What is the cost of you all?
Parlor and boudoir and stair,
Crowded with furniture rare;
Gems from the mountains and seas,
Spires that out-measure the trees;
Chamber and palace and hall—
What is the price of you all?

[*Voices.*]

What did we cost? Bend ear;
What did we cost? Now hear.

Several millions men,
There in the field and fen.
Look! they are stripped and grim,
Sturdy of voice and limb.

Painfully, now, they toil
Into the sullen soil;
Stabbing the hills and meads,
Planting the silent seeds.
Into each streaming face
Glides the hot sun apace.
You in the thoughtful guise,
You with the dreamy eyes—
Why do you labor so?
Where do your earnings go?—
"*A goodly part to the rulers that form the powers that be;*
A modest part, if lucky, for my family and for me;
And all the rest for the splendors that fringe the river and sea."

[*Voices.*]
What did we cost? Bend ear;
What did we cost? Now hear.

Listen! the factory wall
Sends out its morning call.
Hear the machinery's din;
Look at the folks within.
Child with a poor, pale face;
Woman with hurried grace;
Man with the look half wise;
Girl with the handsome eyes.
How the long spindles whirl!
How the rich webs unfurl!
Maid with the orbs that quiver
With light from "Over the River,"*
Why are you toiling so?
Where do your wages go?—
"*A goodly part to the owners, whoever they may be;*
A little part to the living of those I love and me;
And all the rest to the cities that gem the river and sea."

---

* As is well known, the weird, inimitable poem, "Over the River," was written by a factory girl.

[*Voices.*]

What do we cost? Now hear:
Hearken, with eye and ear.

Several thousand men,
There in the hill and glen;
Forward, march! Take aim!
Fire! now a storm of flame!
Shriek and curse and shout;
Death-beds lying about.
Man with the kingly face,
There in that gory place
Bleeding and writhing so
(Well a moment ago),
Tell me, in mangled tones—
Tell us, amid your groans,
What do they buy with war?
What were you fighting for?—
"*For country and for glory, and for the powers that be;*
To deck with pride and honor the family dear to me;
And to defend our cities that gem the river and sea."

[*Voices.*]

What do we cost? Bend ear:
No; you will never hear.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

NOVEMBER 1, 18—.

Wind north-east; weather getting cross and cool;
Wife and the children gone to Sunday-school.
And I—not very well—am home again,
Holding a conversation with my pen.
And all that I can make it say to me
Is Wealth, wealth, wealth! how much I hear and see!

Strange, how, on human brains, sixteen times o'er,
Is stamped and carved the magic word of More!
Some several thousands to my credit lie
In a small bank on Wall Street, handy by;
But I can't help contriving what I'd do
If I possessed the whole Sub-Treasury too;
Or if I had (to take a modest tone)
A million million dollars, all my own!

The subject took so strong a growth in me,
I overtalked the same, last night, at tea;*
And so my oldest daughter (who can rhyme,
And strikes some notes that with her father's chime)
Became with that same foolishness possessed,
So much so that it would not let her rest,
But hung about her bedside all the night
And brought its capabilities in sight.
So much so that she threw it into verse
As bad as that her father writes—or worse.
And then, with some unconscious girlish grace,
And blushes chasing all about her face,
She, in a way I've learned to understand
Quite accident'ly, slipped it in my hand.
It was not made in public to appear,
But, privately, I'll paste it right in here:

IF I'D A MILLION MILLIONS.

If I'd a million millions—
Just think! a million millions!—
What wouldn't I do—what couldn't I do—
If I'd a million millions?
From every forest's finest tree
My many-gabled house should be;
With silver threads from golden looms
Should be attired my palace-rooms;

* Our dinner is at noon; our supper, six,
We have not yet learned all the city tricks.

My blossomed table have the best
Of all the East and all the West;
My bed should be a daintier thing
Than ever sheltered queen or king;
What wouldn't I do,
What couldn't I do,
If I'd a million millions?

If I'd a million millions—
A good, square million millions—
With gratefulness my friends should bless
Me and my million millions!
None that had e'er befriended me
But he a millionaire should be;
Who kindly words of me had told,
Should find their silver turned to gold;
And he who did but just advance
The sunbeam of a friendly glance
In my affliction's cloudy day
Should have rich, unexpected pay.
What wouldn't I do,
What couldn't I do,
If I'd a million millions?

If I'd a million millions—
Just think! a million millions!—
How many coals on hostile souls
I'd heap with all my millions!
No enemy that earned my hate
Should for a fiery guerdon wait;
With roses sweet I'd twine him o'er
Until the thorns should prick him sore
(How much of credit may be claimed
For *sweetly* making foes ashamed
I do not know; it may depend
On how much true love we extend);
But love outpoured
I could afford,
If I'd a million millions!

An honest million millions—
Just think! a million millions!
The poor should bless the strange success
That gave me all those millions!
I'd slaughter every hungry wight
Within the circle of my sight,
And resurrect him with such food
As should go far to make him good;
No poor-house but must bow its head
And gaze at cottage walls instead;
And hungry paupers soon should see
A year of genuine jubilee.
Nought should alloy
Their perfect joy,
That could be saved by millions!

Just think! a million millions!—
The care of all those millions!
And after all, what would befall
A life with all those millions?
Would not the lucre clog my brain,
And make me hard and cold and vain?
Might not my treasure win my heart,
And make me loath with it to part?
How could I tell, by mortal sign,
Betwixt my money's friends and mine?
And then, the greed, and strife, and curse,
The world brings round a princely purse:
Perhaps my soul,
Upon the whole,
Is best, without the millions!

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Now comes the Christmas-tide:
Love wakes on every side;
Mirth smiles from every eye;
Wreaths greet the passer-by.

Who, full of haughty pride,
Loves not the Christmas-tide?
He who, with av'rice low,
Cares not to joy bestow.

God save the wretch denied
Love for the Christmas-tide!
God tell his hardened heart
Pure joy must joy impart!

Who, close to grief allied,
Grieves 'mid the Christmas-tide?
She who, at Sorrow's call,
Now mourns the loss of all.

God save the dear bereft—
Teach her the mercies left!
Show her that clouds may yet
Lift, ere her sun be set!

Who lonely must abide
All through the Christmas-tide?
He who has never known
Love-passion of his own.

So follows he his fate,
Friendly but desolate;
So—sad—his heart must hide
All through the Christmas-tide!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

DECEMBER 25, 18—.

Wind in the north-east; snow in wagon-loads;
Good sleighing everywhere on all the roads.
Family healthy, sensible, and pleasant,
And each one got the proper Christmas-present.

(At least it seems so, for they all act suited,
And Santa Claus's taste hasn't been disputed.)
Our family room is filled with tasty mixings
Of evergreens and other woman-fixings;
The open grate makes things look rich and mellow,
With good hard coals the fire has painted yellow;*
Pictures peep from the walls, with *thought* all through them,
That set me studying every time I view them;
There's certain books upon the centre-table
That say what I'd have said if I'd been able;
And, measuring up this room with honest style,
'Tisn't a bad place to be in for a while.

And so I sit here, thinking, musing, dreaming,
About the world and all its curious scheming,
And, full of certainty-begotten doubt,
Wondering what this life is all about
(From all that I can learn I'm not to blame,
For wiser men have often done the same).

We went a mile or two, last night, to see
The decorations on a Christmas-tree;
I spied, hung on that sapling's gilded arms,
Things that would buy a couple good-sized farms;
And just upon our way home, I should guess
We met some fifty people, more or less,
Who needed, to make passable their days,
A decent share of what those farms would raise.

But here's the question: should those ill-to-do
Deprive rich people of their comforts too?
Because there are some people lack for bread,
Must others' minds and fancies go unfed?
It's quite a puzzle, which I don't know whether
My clumsy mind knows how to put together;

---

* Although *to me* it doesn't contain the charm
Of our old, wide log fire-place on the farm.

But one thing's sure: wants satisfied wants breed—
The more folks get, the more they seem to need.
Then, one man lives on what would starve another,
And what is joy for you might kill your brother.

JANUARY 5, 18—.

Went to a skating-rink a little while,
To see them slide in the new-fangled style;
And, strange enough, this eve a letter came
From a friend—Abdiel Stebbins is his name—
A cousin of my aunt, Sophia Dean;
A wise old man, but clumsy like, and green.
He's on a visit in a neighboring city,
And he has been a-skating—more's the pity!
He tells it in a manner quite sincere;
I think perhaps I'll paste it right in here:

[FARMER STEBBINS ON ROLLERS.]

ROCHESTER, *January* 4.

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

We got here safe—my worthy wife an' me—
An' put up at James Sunnyhopes'—a pleasant place to be;
An' Isabel, his oldest girl, is home from school just now,
An' pets me with her manners all her young man will allow;
An' his good wife has monstrous sweet an' culinary ways:
It is a summery place to pass a few cold winter days.

Besides, I've various cast-iron friends in different parts o' town,
That's always glad to have me call whenever I come down;
But t'other day, when 'mongst the same I undertook to roam,
I could not find a single one that seemed to be to home!
An' when I asked their whereabouts, the answer was, "I think,
If you're a-goin' down that way, you'll find 'em at the Rink."

I asked what night the Lyceum folks would hold their next debate—
(I've sometimes gone an' helped 'em wield the cares of Church an' State),

An' if protracted meetin's now was holdin' anywhere
(I like to get my soul fed up with fresh celestial fare);
Or when the next church social was; they'd give a knowin' wink,
An' say, "I b'lieve there's nothin' now transpirin' but the Rink."

"What is this 'Rink?'" I innocent inquired, that night at tea.
"Oh, you must go," said Isabel, "this very night with me!
And Mrs. Stebbins she must go, an' skate there with us, too!"
My wife replied, "My dear, just please inform me when I do.
But you two go." An' so we went, an' saw a circus there,
With which few sights I've ever struck will anyways compare.

It seems a good-sized meetin'-house had given up its pews
(The church an' pastor had resigned, from spiritual blues),
An' several acres of the floor was made a skatin' ground,
Where folks of every shape an' size went skippin' round an' round;
An' in the midst a big brass band was helpin' on the fun,
An' everything was gay as sixteen weddin's joined in one.

I've seen small insects crazy-like go circlin' through the air,
An' wondered if they thought some time they'd maybe get somewhere;
I've seen a million river-bugs go scootin' round an' round,
An' wondered what 'twas all about, or what they'd lost or found;
But men an' women, boys an' girls, upon a hard-wood floor,
All whirlin' round like folks possessed, I never saw before.

An' then it straight came back to me, the things I'd read an' heard
About the rinks, an' how their ways was wicked an' absurd;
I'd learned somewhere that skatin' wasn't a healthy thing to do—
But there was Doctor Saddlebags—his fam'ly with him, too!
I'd heard that 'twasn't a proper place for Christian folks to seek—
Old Deacon Perseverance Jinks flew past me like a streak!

Then Sister Is'bel Sunnyhopes put on a pair o' skates,
An' started off as if she'd run through several different States.
My goodness! how that gal showed up! I never did opine
That she could twist herself to look so charmin' an' so fine;
And then a fellow that she knew took hold o' hands with her,
A sort o' double crossways like, an' helped her, as it were.

I used to skate; an' 'twas a sport of which I once was fond.
Why, I could write my autograph on Tompkins' saw-mill pond.
Of course to slip on runners, that is one thing, one may say,
An' movin' round on casters is a somewhat different way;
But when the fun that fellow had came flashin' to my eye,
I says, "I'm young again; by George, I'll skate once more or die!"

A little boy a pair o' skates to fit my boots soon found—
He had to put 'em on for me (I weigh three hundred pound);
An' then I straightened up an' says, "Look here, you younger chaps,
You think you're runnin' some'at past us older heads, perhaps.
If this young lady here to me will trust awhile her fate,
I'll go around a dozen times an' show you how to skate."

She was a niceish, plump young gal, I'd noticed quite a while,
An' she reached out her hands with 'most too daughterly a smile;
But off we pushed with might an' main; when all to once the wheels
Departed suddenly above, an' took along my heels;
My head assailed the floor as if 'twas tryin' to get through,
An' all the stars I ever saw arrived at once in view.

'Twas sing'lar (as not quite unlike a saw-log there I lay)
How many of the other folks was goin' that same way;
They stumbled over me in one large animated heap,
An' formed a pile o' legs an' arms not far from ten foot deep;
But after they had all climbed off, in rather fierce surprise,
I lay there like a saw-log still—considerin' how to rise.

Then, dignified I rose, with hands upon my ample waist,
An' then sat down again with large and very painful haste;
An' rose again, and started off to find a place to rest,
Then on my gentle stomach stood, an' tore my meetin' vest;
When Sister Sunnyhopes slid up as trim as trim could be,
An' she an' her young fellow took compassionate charge o' me.

Then after I'd got off the skates an' flung 'em out o' reach,
I rose, while all grew hushed an' still, an' made the followin' speech:
"My friends, I've struck a small idea (an' struck it pretty square),
Which physic'ly an' morally will some attention bear:

". . . . WHEN ALL TO ONCE THE WHEELS DEPARTED SUDDENLY ABOVE, AN' TOOK ALONG MY HEELS."

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Those who their balance can preserve are safe here any day,
An' those who can't, I rather think, had better keep away."

Then I limped out with very strong unprecedented pains,
An' hired a horse at liberal rates to draw home my remains;
An' lay abed three days, while wife laughed at an' nursed me well,
An' used up all the arnica two drug-stores had to sell;
An' when Miss Is'bel Sunnyhopes said, "Won't you skate some more?"
I answered, "Not while I remain on this terrestrial shore."

FARMER STEBBINS ON ROLLERS.

WANT.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

FEBRUARY 5, 18—.

WANT—want—want—want! O God! forgive the crime,
If I, asleep, awake, at any time,
Upon my bended knees, my back, my feet,
In church, on bed, on treasure-lighted street,
Have ever *hinted*, or, much less, have pleaded
That I hadn't ten times over all I needed!
Lord save my soul! I never knew the way
That people starve along from day to day;
May gracious Heaven forgive me, o'er and o'er,
That I have never found these folks before!

Of course some news of it has come my way,
Like a faint echo on a drowsy day;
At home I "gave," whene'er by suffering grieved,
And called it "Charity," and felt relieved;
And thought that I was never undertasked,
If I bestowed when with due deference asked.
But no one finds the *poorest poor*, I doubt,
Unless he goes himself and hunts them out;
And when you get *real suffering* among,
Be thankful if your heart-strings are not wrung!

These thoughts sobbed through me this cold, snowy day,
As carefully I picked a dubious way
'Mongst nakedness and want on every side,
And a rough, masculine angel for my guide,

Who goes about among affliction's heirs,
And gives his life to piece out some of theirs.
Up—up—up—up! and yet, I am afraid,
Farther from Heaven at every step we made!
Gaunt, hungry creatures stood on every side
With cheeks drawn close and sad eyes opened wide,
Filled to the brim with greedy, starving prayers,
As we went past them up the creaking stairs.

And I peeped into rooms 'twas death to see
(Or, rather, they peeped darkly out at me)—
Such as I wouldn't have had the cheek to 've shown
To any swine I've ever chanced to own.
'Twas sad to see, in this great misery-cup,
How guilt and innocence were all mixed up:
Here lay a fellow, stupid, dull, and dumb,
Whose breath was like a broken keg of rum;
And there a baby, looking scared and odd,
Who had not been a week away from God.
Here a clean woman, toiling for her bread;
And there a wretch whose dirty heart was dead.
Here a sound rascal, lazy, loud, and bold;
And there the helpless, weak and sick and old.

Want—want! O Lord! forgive me, o'er and o'er,
That I haven't found these suffering folks before!
We had a decent poor-house in our town,
And I would often drive my spare horse down,
And take a little stroll among them there,
And try to cheer their every-day despair,
And with their little wants and worries join,
And chink round 'mongst them with small bits of coin
(Done up in good advice, somewhat severe),
And send them Christmas turkeys every year;
Then, in my cosy home, think, with a grin,
What a fine, liberal angel I had been.
But here, O heavens! I find them, high and low,
Hundreds of pauper-houses in a row!

And suffering—suffering—in a shape, I vow,
That makes my poor old tears run even now!

For city trouble, any one will find,
Is more ingenious than the country kind,
And has a thousand cute-invented ways
To torture men and shorten off their days.
And while we wonder that God made it so,
He doesn't seem very anxious we should know;
But He is willing we should search His plan,
And pry around and find out all we can;
And I suspect, when pains and troubles fall,
That every one is useful, after all.

At any rate, the miseries that I see
Are useful in their good effects on me;
And though that isn't a great thing, on the whole
(Though Heaven *does* put a premium on each soul),
Yet there are several people, I suspect,
Who need a little of that same effect;
And if they do not get it, old and young,
'Twill be because I've lost my poor old tongue.

One more small portion of God's plan I see
Concerning its effect on "even me:"
And that's its leading me, by methods queer,
To be some help to these poor people here.
For now I promise, from this very night,
And hereby put it down in black and white,
That out of every day that's given me yet,
And out of every dollar I can get,
And out of every talent, small or large,
That God sees fit to put into my charge,
A part shall be devoted—square and sure—
To God's own suffering, struggling, dying poor!

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Poverty, why wast thou born
In the world's earliest morn?
Why hast thou lived all the years,
Sowing thy pains and thy tears?
Roaming about thou art seen,
Crooked, decrepit, and lean;
Travelling all the world through—
Suffering's "wandering Jew."
Thin and unkempt is thy hair,
Fleshless as parchment thy cheek,
Sad and ungainly thine air,
Hollow the words thou dost speak;
Bony and grasping thy hand,
Dreary thy days in the land.
Poverty, why wast thou born
Under the world's quiet scorn?

Poverty, thou hast been seen
Clad in a comelier mien.
Oft, to the clear-seeing eyes,
Thou art a saint in disguise.
Discipline rich thou hast brought,
Lessons of labor and thought.
Oft, in thy dreariest night,
Virtue gleams sturdy and bright;
Oft, from thy scantiest hour,
Grow the beginnings of power;
Oft, 'mongst thy squalors and needs,
Live such magnificent deeds
As the proud angels will crown
There in their gold-streeted town;
Oft, from thy high garrets, throng
Notes of magnificent song,

That, from sad day unto day,
Float through the ages away.
Poverty—brave or forlorn—
God knoweth why thou wast born.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

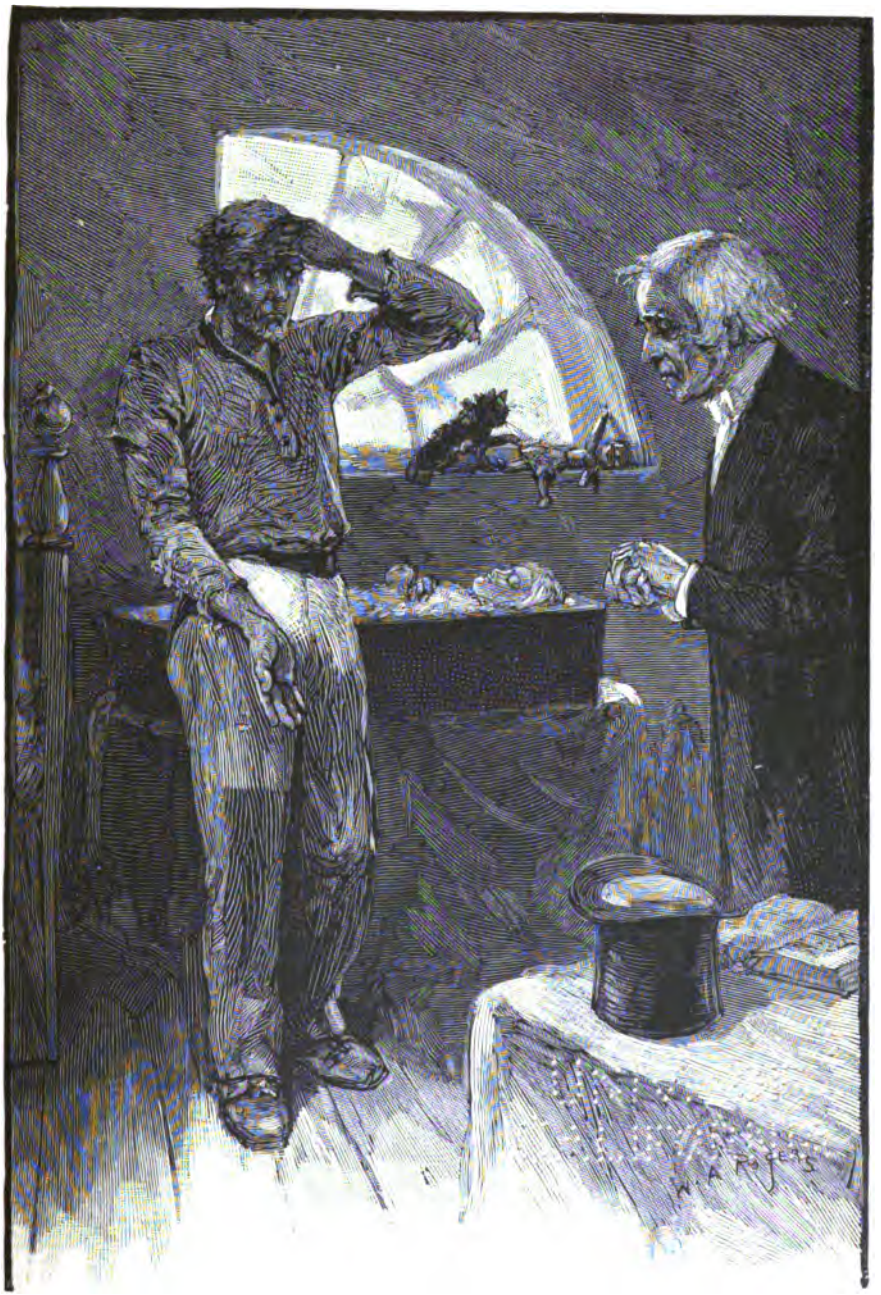
FEBRUARY 12, 18—.

Wind in the South; a fresh, sweet, winter day;
'Twould have been sad to see it go away,
If 'twere not that the sunset's signal-lights
Glimmered awhile across the Jersey heights,
Then, lightly dancing o'er the river, came
And set some New York windows all aflame.
(From a clear sunset I can always borrow
God's sweet half promise of a fair to-morrow.)

But, while I gazed upon that splendid sight,
My mind *would* take a heavy, care-winged flight
Up to a small back garret, far away,
Where I had stood at two o'clock to-day.

Want—want—want—want! it hung 'round everywhere;
It threw its odors on the sickly air!
The room was somewhat smaller, to begin,
Than I would put a span of horses in;
The floor was rough and damp as floor could be;
No picture on the walls but Poverty;
The bed was ragged, scanty, hard, and drear;
A rough-made, empty crib was standing near;
The "window" 'd never felt the sun's warm stare,
Or breathed a breath of good old-fashioned air;

A little, worn-out doll some child had had,
Looking, like its surroundings, rough and sad,



"YES, IT'S STRAIGHT AND TRUE, GOOD PREACHER, EVERY WORD THAT YOU HAVE SAID."

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And dressed in rags and pinched and famine-faced,
But bearing still some marks of girlish taste;
A gaunt, gray kitten, showing every sign
That it was on the last life of its nine,
Though trying hard to feel quite sleek and fat,
And not a very care-worn, desolate cat;
A man, so grieved my heart can see him now,
With frightful sorrow printed on his brow;

A rough, wood coffin stood there near the bed,
Looking uneasy even for the dead;
A little, pallid face I saw therein—
A niceish-looking child she must have been,
As sweet as ever need to feed a glance,
If she had only had one-half a chance.
But still, she woke a thought I could not smother—
"That child was murdered in some way or other."*

And my opinion didn't seem much amiss
When the man spoke up, something like to this:

[THAT SWAMP OF DEATH.]

Yes, it's straight and true, good Preacher, every word that you have said;
Do not think these tears unmanly—they're the first ones I have shed!
But they kind o' beat and pounded 'gainst my aching heart and brain,
And they would not be let go of, and they gave me extra pain.

I am just a laboring man, sir—work for food and rags and sleep,
And I hardly know the meaning of the life I slave to keep;
But I know when times are cheery, or my heart is made of lead;
I know sorrow when I see it, and—I know my girl is dead!

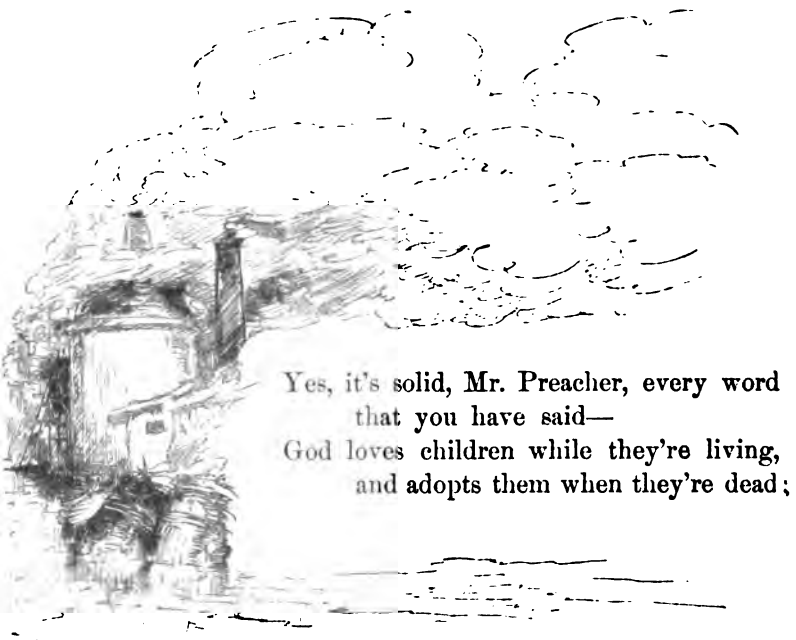
---

* All this, above the shoulder, I could see,
Of an old preacher who had come with me—
A man who, 'mongst those garrets, earns, they say,
A house and lot in heaven every day.

No, she isn't much to look at—just a plainish bit of clay,
Of the sort of perished children that die 'round here every day;
And how *she* could break a heart up you'd be slow to understand,
But she held *mine*, Mr. Preacher, in that little withered hand!

There are lots of prettier children, with a face and form more fine—
Let their parents love and pet them—but *this* little one was *mine!*
There was no one else to cling to when we two were torn apart,
And it's death—this amputation of the strong arms of the heart!

I am just an ignorant man, sir, of the kind that digs and delves,
But I've learned that human beings cannot stay in by themselves;
They will reach out after something, be it good or be it bad,
And my heart on hers had settled, and—the girl was all I had!



Yes, it's solid, Mr. Preacher, every word
that you have said—
God loves children while they're living,
and adopts them when they're dead;

"CHOKED AND STRANGLED BY THE FOUL BREATH OF THE CHIMNEYS OVER THERE."

But I cannot help contriving, do the very best I can,
That it wasn't God's mercy took her, but the selfishness of man!

Why, she lay here, faint and gasping, moaning for a bit of air,
Choked and strangled by the foul breath of the chimneys over there;
It climbed through every window, and crept under every door,
And I tried to bar against it, and she only choked the more.

"OH, THE AIR IS PURE AND WHOLESOME WHERE SOME BABIES COO AND REST,
AND THEY TRIM THEM OUT WITH RIBBONS, AND THEY FEED THEM WITH THE BEST."

She would lie there, with the old look that poor children somehow get;
She had learned to use her patience, and she did not cry or fret,
But would lift her little face up, so piteous and so fair,
And would whisper, "*I am dying for a little breath of air!*"

If she'd gone off through the sunlight, 'twouldn't have seemed so hard to me,
Or among the fresh cool breezes that come sweeping from the sea;
But it's nothing less than murder when my darling's every breath
Chokes and strangles with the poison from that chimney swamp of death!

Oh, it's not enough those people own the very ground we tread,
And the shelter that we crouch in, and the tools that earn our bread;
They must place their blotted mortgage on the air and on the sky,
And shut out our little heaven, till our children pine and die!

Oh, the air is pure and wholesome where *some* babies coo and rest,
And they trim them out with ribbons, and they feed them with the best;
But the love they bear is mockery to the gracious God on high,
If to give those children luxuries some one else's child must die!

Oh, we wear the cheapest clothing, and our meals are scant and brief,
And perhaps those fellows fancy there's a cheaper grade of grief;
But the people all around here, losing children, friends, and mates,
Can inform them that *Affliction hasn't any under-rates.*

I'm no grumbler at the rulers of "this free and happy land,"
And I don't go 'round explaining things I do not understand;
But I know there's something treacherous in the working of the law,
When we get a dose of poison out of every breath we draw.

I have talked too much, good Preacher, and I hope you won't be vexed,
But *I'm* going to make a sermon with that white face for a text;
And I'll preach it, and I'll preach it, till I set the people wild
O'er the heartless, reckless grasping of the men who killed my child!

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Still do I write—day-time and night—
That which I see in my leisurely flight.
What is this sign that is claiming the sight?—
"Lodgings within here, at five cents per night!"

Let me examine this cheap-entered nest,
Pay my five cents, and go in with the rest;
Let me jot down with sly pen, but sincere,
What, in this garret, I see, smell, and hear.
Great, gloomy den! where, on close-clustered shelves,
Shelterless wretches can shelter themselves;
Pestilence-drugged is the murderous air,
Full of the breathings of want and despair!
  Horrible place!—where The Crushed Race
Winces 'neath Poverty's dolefullest blight—
  Bivouac of suffering, sin, and disgrace:
What can you look for, at five cents per night?

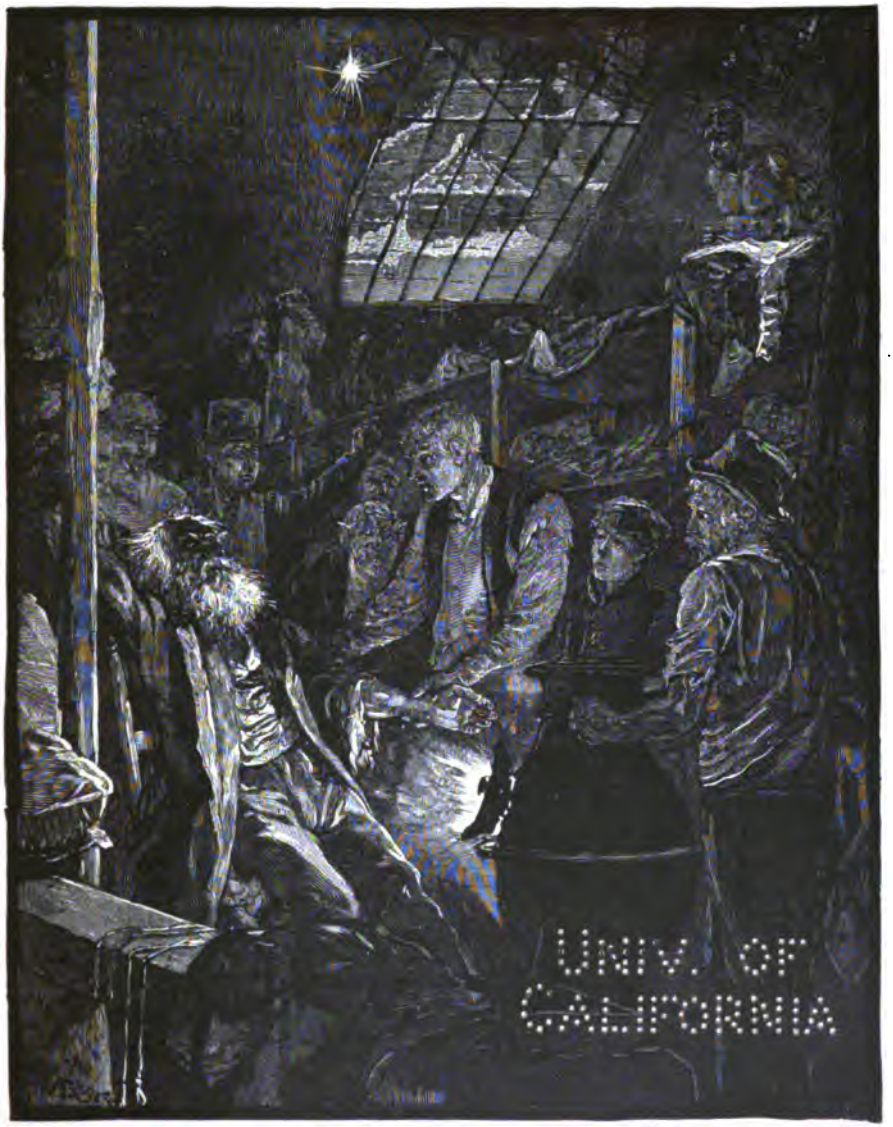
Hustle them in, jostle them in,
Many of nation, and divers of kin;
Sallow, and yellow, and tawny of skin—
Hustle them, bustle them, jostle them in!
Handfuls of withered but suffering clay,
Swept from the East by oppression away;
Baffled adventurers, conquered and pressed
Back from the gates of the glittering West;
Men who with indolence, folly, and guile
Carelessly slighted Prosperity's smile;
Men who have struggled 'gainst Destiny's frown,
Inch after inch, till she hunted them down.
  Scores in a tier—pile them up here—
Many of peoples and divers of kin;
  Drift of the nations, from far and from near,
Hustle them, bustle them, jostle them in!

Islands of green, mistily seen,
Hover in visions these sleepers between;
Beautiful memories, cozy and clean,
Restfully precious, and sweetly serene.

Womanly kisses have softened the brow
Lying in drunken bewilderment now;
Infantile faces have cuddled for rest
Here on this savage and rag-covered breast.
Lucky the wretch who, in Poverty's ways,
Bears not the burden of "happier days:"
Many a midnight is gloomier yet
By the remembrance of stars that have set!
  Echoes of pain, drearily plain,
Come of old melodies sweet and serene;
  Images sad to the heart and the brain
Rise out of memories cozy and green.

Hustle them in, bustle them in,
Fetid with squalor, and reeking with gin,
Loaded with misery, folly, and sin—
Hustle them, bustle them, jostle them in!
Few are the sorrows so hopelessly drear
But they have sad representatives here;
Never a crime so complete and confessed
But has come hither for one night of rest.
Seeds that the thorns of diseases may bear
Float on the putrid and smoke-laden air;
Ghosts of destruction are haunting each breath—
Soft-stepping agents, commissioned by Death.
  Crowd them in rows, comrades or foes,
Deadened with liquor and deafened with din,
  Fugitives out of the frosts and the snows,
Hustle them, bustle them, jostle them in!

Guilt has not pressed unto its breast
All who are taking this dingy unrest:
Innocence often is Misery's guest;
Sorrow may strike at the brightest and best.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"WEARY OLD MAN WITH THE SNOW-DRIFTED HAIR,
NOT BY YOUR FAULT ARE YOU SUFFERING THERE."

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You from whom hope, but not feeling, has fled,
This is your refuge from pauperhood's bed;
Timorous lad with a sensitive face,
You have no record of crime and disgrace;
Weary old man with the snow-drifted hair,
Not by your fault are you suffering there,
Never a child of your cherishing nigh—
'Tis not for sin you so drearily die.
  Pain, in all lands, smites with two hands—
Guilty and good may encounter the test;
  Misery's cord is of different strands;
Sorrow may strike at the brightest and best.

Sympathy's tear, warm and sincere,
Cannot but glisten while lingering near.
Edge not away, sir, in horror of fear,
These are your brothers—this family here!
What if Misfortune had made *you* forlorn
With her stiletto as well as her scorn?
What if some fiend had been making *you* sure
With more temptation than flesh could endure?
What if you deep in the slums had been born,
Cradled in villany, christened in scorn?
What if your toys had been tainted with crime?
What if your baby hands dabbled in slime?
  Judge them with ruth. Maybe, in truth,
It is not they, but their luck, that is here.
  Fancy *your* growth from a sin-nurtured youth;
Pity their weakness, and give them a tear.

Help them get out; help them keep out!
Labor to teach them what life is about;
Give them a hand unencumbered with doubt;
Feed them and clothe them, but pilot them out!

Mortals depraved, whatsoe'er they have been,
Soonest can mend from assistance *within.*
Warm them and feed them—they're beasts, even then;
Teach them and love them—they grow into men.
You who 'mid luxuries costly and grand
Decorate homes with munificent hand,
Use, in some measure, your exquisite arts
For the improvement of minds and of hearts.
  Lilies must grow up from below,
Where the strong rootlets are twining about;
  Goodness and honesty ever must flow
From the heart-centres—to blossom without.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

FEBRUARY 28, 18—.

Wind in the west; no symptoms of a thaw;
The coldest, bleakest day I ever saw.
And I'm housed up, with nothing much to do
Except to read the papers through and through.

"Died of starvation!"—what does this all mean?
Stores of provisions everywhere are seen.
"Died of starvation!"—here's the place and name
Right in the paper; let us blush for shame!

This city *wastes* what any one would call
Nine hundred times enough to feed us all;
And yet folks die in garret, hut, and street,
Simply because there isn't enough to eat!

Oh, heavens! there runs a great big Norway rat,
Sleek as a banker, and almost as fat;
He daily breakfasts, dines, and sups, and thrives
On what would save a pair of human lives;

He rears a family with his own fat features,
On food we lock up from our fellow-creatures;
And human beings fall down by the way,
And die for want of food, this very day!

"Frozen to death!"—the worse than useless moth
May feed, this year, on bales and bales of cloth;
Untouched, ten million tons of coal can lie,
While God's own human beings freeze and die!

"Died of starvation!"—waves of golden wheat
All summer dashed and glistened at our feet;
Dull, senseless grain is stored in buildings high,
And God's own human beings starve and die!

I would not rob from rich men what they earn,
But I would have them sweet compassion learn;
Oh, do not Pity's gentle voice defy,
While God's own human beings starve and die!

March 5, 18—.

Died of starvation!—yes, it has been done;
To-day I've seen a hunger-murdered one,
Who had a perfect right, it seemed to me,
The mistress of a happy home to be;
And yet we found her on a ragged bed,
One white arm underneath a shapely head;
Her long, bright hair was lying, fold on fold,
Like finest threads spun from a bar of gold;
Her face was chiselled after beauty's style,
And want had not hewn out its witching smile;
'Twas like white marble half endowed with breath—
The face of this sweet maiden—starved to death!

Not far from where she lay, so sadly lone,
Her calendar, or "diary," was thrown;
They let me have it when the law had read
This plaintive, girlish message from the dead.

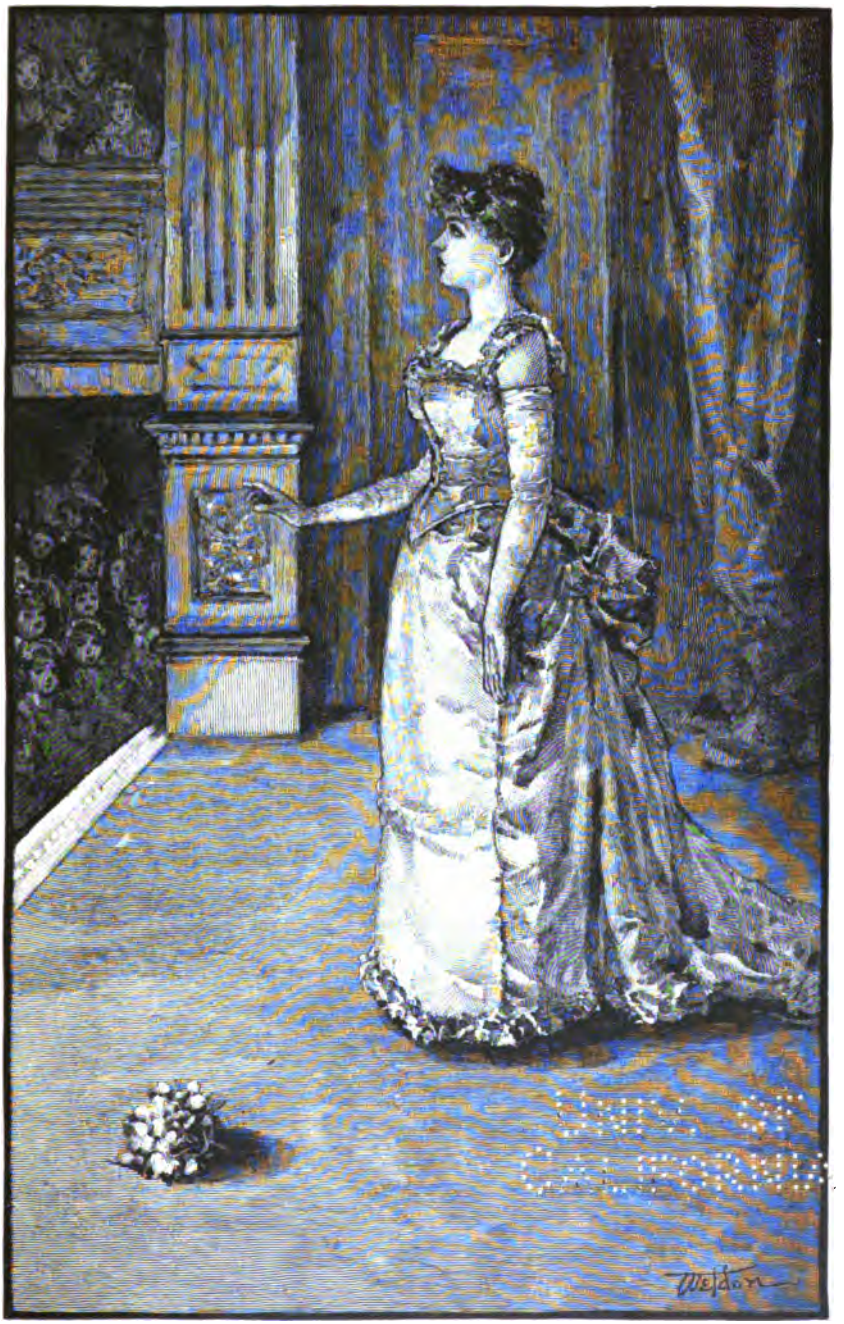
It doesn't look well among these notes to stay,
Of one who feeds on blessings every day;
But I will put it in here, for my heart
To look at when I feel too proud and smart!

A SEWING-GIRL'S DIARY.

FEBRUARY 1, 18—.

Here—am I here?
Or is it fancy, born of fear?
Yes—O God, save me!—this is I,
And not some wretch of whom I've read,
In that bright girlhood, when the sky
Each night strewed star-dust o'er my head;
When each morn meant a gala-day,
And all my little world was gay.
I had not felt the touch of Care;
I'd heard of something called Despair,
But knew it only by its name.
(How far it seemed!—how soon it came!)
Yes, all the bright years hurried by;
Sorrow was near, and—this is I!

Is't the same girl that stood, one night,
There in the wide hall's thrilling light,
With all the costly robes astir
That love and pride had bought for her?
How the great crowd, 'mid their kind din,
Gazed with gaunt eyes and drank me in!
And then they hushed at each low word,
So Death himself might have been heard,
To hear me mournfully rehearse
The tender Hood's pathetic verse
About the woman who, half dead,
Stitched her frail life in every thread.
How little then I knew the need!
Yet for my own sex I did plead,
And my heart crept on each word's track
Till soft sobs from the crowd came back.



"IS'T THE SAME GIRL THAT STOOD, ONE NIGHT,
THERE IN THE WIDE HALL'S THRILLING LIGHT?"

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I saw my sister, streaming-eyed,
Yet bearing still a face of pride:
Oh, sister! when you looked at me
With that quick yearning glance of love,
Did you peer on, to what might be—
What is?—and is it known above?
When that great throng a shout did raise,
And gave me words of heart-felt praise,
And loving eyes their incense burned
Till my young girlish head was turned—
Did your clear eye see farther then
A moment past all mortal ken,
And in the dreary scene I drew
Did my own form appear to you?
It might have been; grief was o'er-nigh,
And—God, have pity!—this is I,
Treading a steep and dang'rous way,
And—earning twenty cents a day!

FEBRUARY 5, 18—.

Father, this is the time we hailed
As your bright birthday. We ne'er failed
To throng about with love's fond arts,
And bring you presents from our hearts;
Your pleasure filled our day with bliss;
Oh what a different one from this!
My love, my father! how you stood
'Twixt me and all that was not good!
How, each o'er-hurried breath I drew,
My girl-heart turned and clung to you!

. . . . . .

How near comes back that dismal day
You sat, sad-faced, with naught to say,
From morn till night! I did not dare
Even to ask to soothe your care;
I knew it was too sadly grand
To feel the light touch of my hand.

Ah! friends you loved had gone astray,
And swept our competence away;
And oh, I strove so hard to save
Your honored gray hairs from the grave!
Too late! your sun went down o'er-soon,
Clouded, in life's mid-afternoon.
You guarded me with patience rare
From e'en the shadow of a care;
You called me "Princess;" and my room
Was dressed as palaces might be;
And—here I am amid this gloom
That mocks, insults, and murders me,
Striving a garret's rent to pay,
And—earning twenty cents a day!

FEBRUARY 20, 18—.

I cannot well afford to write—
My fingers are in call elsewhere;
But I must voice my black despair,
Or I should die before 'twas night.
I have no mother now to call,
And seek her heart, and tell her all.
O, Mother! well I know you rest
In yonder heaven, serene and blest:
How sadly, strangely sweet 'twould be
To know you knew and pitied me!
And yet I would not have you dream
E'en of the dagger's faintest gleam
That's pointing at my maiden breast.
Rest on, sweet mother, sweetly rest!
And still I feel your loving art,
Sometimes upon my aching heart.
That night I stood upon the pier,
And the gray river swept so near,
And glanced up at me in a way
Some one with friendly voice might say,
"Come to my arms and rest, poor girl."
And I leaned down with head awhirl,

"AND HATEFUL HUNGER HAS COME IN."

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And heart so heavy it might sink
Me underneath the river's brink,
A hand I could not feel or see
Drew me away and fondled me;
A voice I felt, unheard, though near,
Said, "Wait! you must not enter here,
And press against me with one stain.
Poor girl, not long you need remain!"

. . . . . .

But, O sweet mother! I must write
The words that would be said to-night,
If you could hold my tired head here!
I cannot see one gleam of cheer;
This is a garret room, so bleak
The cold air stings my fading cheek;
Fireless my room, my garb is thin,
And hateful Hunger has come in,
And says, "Toil on, you foolish one!
You shall be mine when all is done."
Two days and nights of pain and dread
I've gnawed upon a crust of bread
(For what scant nourishment 'twould give)
So hard, I could not eat and live!
O mother! I to God shall pray
This tale in heaven may ne'er be told;
For you are where whole streets are gold,
And I—earn twenty cents a day!

February 22, 18—.

He never loved me. For no one
Could love and do as he has done.
How my heart clung and clung to him,
E'en when respect and faith grew dim;
His lightest touch could thrill me so!
Weak girl, 'twas hard to bid him go.
Though wayward was his heart I knew,
I would have sworn that he was true!

Oh, how I loved him! or maybe
Loved some one that I thought was he.
They brought me—what? his mangled corse?
Would God they had! They brought me worse.

I saw one who should bear his name,
One whose pale face was fiercely grieved,
One whom he wantonly deceived,
And sentenced to a life of shame.
That was the end. I could not wed
A man whose nobler self was dead.

O, man!—a brave and god-like race,
But you can be so vile and base!
And when there is no urgent need,
You can protect us well indeed;
But when adversity is near,
When the wave breaks upon our head,
When we are crushed with want and dread,
Then we have most from you to fear.
Why do men strangely look me o'er
When I their mercy need the more?
Do they not know a girl may taste
The dregs of want and yet be chaste?
Should woman sell her soul away
To save its manacles of clay?

February 23, 1885.

All honest means of life have failed.
The small accomplishments I've tried
That pleased friends in my days of pride,
Are naught; but vice has not prevailed,
And, thank Heaven, should not, though my heart
Were torn a thousand times apart.
But God shield helpless girls alway
Who live on twenty cents a day!

FEBRUARY 24, 1885.

Weak, weak, still weaker do I grow:
My mournful fate I can but know;
God, keep me not long here, I pray,
To toil—on twenty cents a day!

FEBRUARY 26, 1885.

Oh, horrors! is it—is it true
What I have read?—if I but knew!
O, God, tell me where can I fly,
Not to be found when I shall die!
They say dead waifs are oft by night
Robbed of a decent burial's right;
That fiends the friendless bodies bear
To crowds of waiting students, where
Men tear them up for men to see.
O, God, sweet God, do pity me!
And I will humbly pray to men:
If this should come within the ken
Of one who lives a true-loved life,
Of one who sister has, or wife;
One who loves women for the best
That is in them, whose lips have pressed
Pure, genuine lips, whom women trust,
Whose heart is free from loathsome lust;
One whom I would have loved if he
Brother or husband were to me—
I ask you—nay, I do command
With that imperiousness you so
Like from a white and shapely hand—
I *order* you—but no, no, no;
I am past that—I humbly pray
That you will see that I unmarred
Have Christian burial. Guard, oh guard,
You men with manly hearts and souls,
My poor dead body from the ghouls!

I strove alway to keep it pure
As the soul in me; it has been
Type of the thoughts that lived within,
The white slave of what shall endure,
My spirit's loved though humble mate;
Let none its white limbs desecrate!

. . . . . .

Weaker—yet weaker—'tis to die
This sharp pain bids me. Ah! good-bye,
World that I was too weak for—

MARCH 10, 18—

Back from a journey; mournful, it is true,
But mingled with a deep-down sweetness, too.
After the law with that poor girl was done,
I found permission with the proper one,
And, though such things by law could not occur,
In my heart-family I adopted her.
(Help much too late to benefit her, living—
It's that way with a good share of our giving!)
But, with a father's love, "Poor girl!" I said,
"You shall have all that I can give you, dead!"
I found, by lightning inquiries I made,
The graveyard where her own loved ones were laid;
I had her body tenderly removed,
And placed among the dear ones that she loved,
With all the honor that the poor, sweet child
Would have if Fortune still upon her smiled.
And when once more the flowers of summer blow,
My wife and daughters and myself will go
And make the sad but grateful duty ours
To see her last earth-dwelling roofed with flowers.

FIRE.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

March 15, 18—.

Fire!—fire!—fire!—fire!—it sets me in a craze
To see a first-class building all ablaze;
A burning house resembles, when I'm nigh,
Some old acquaintance just about to die;
For structures that a person often sees
Look some like human beings—same as trees.
(There used to be some trees on my old place
That I'd know anywhere—just by their face.)
And when, last night, some bells began to cry,
And big fire-engines rushed and rattled by,
In just three minutes down the stairs I strode,
And hurried—somewhat dressed—into the road
(Partly to help a bit, if so might be,
And partly, I suppose, to hear and see).
It was a dark and thunder-stormy night;
There wasn't one inch of honest sky in sight;
Great black-finned clouds were swimming through the air,
And now and then their lightning-eyes would glare,
And, like a lot of cannon far away,
Some peals of thunder came from o'er the bay.
'Twas one of those strange nights I can't explain,
That make you think they're just a-going to rain,
But never do—save now and then a trace
Of a small drop comes dashing on your face;

One of those nights that try to keep you vexed
And wondering as to what will happen next.
I like such times: they kind of draw me nearer
To things unseen, and make all mystery clearer.

I ran like sin, and reached the fire at last:
A good-sized church was going, pretty fast.
(I'd noticed it a hundred times or more,
And several times had stepped inside the door.)
The burglar flames within had prowled around
A long time previous to their being found,
Till they had gained such foothold and such might
They'd turned to robbers—stealing plain in sight.
The dome and spires had on them flags of red;
They soon came thundering down from overhead.
It looked as if infernal spirits came,
To take this church away, in smoke and flame!

I wondered, in that wild, expensive glare,
How many of the home-robbed flock were there
To see the shelter where their souls had fed
Swept from existence by that broom of red.
Here was the family pew, so long time prized;
There was the font where they had been baptized;
Here was the altar, where one day they stood,
Started for Heaven, and promised to be good;
Or where they'd wept around some cherished love
Who'd "taken a letter" to The Church above.
And still I thought, as my eyes soulward turned,
How many things there are that can't be burned;
But still we cling, and cling, and hate to part
With the place where we found them on the start.

A sneerish sort of fellow stood by me,
And said, "To such extent as I can see,
When churches get afire, by night or day,
The Lord stands still and lets 'em burn away.
If this is His abode beyond a doubt,
Why doesn't He raise his hand and put it out?"

Said I, "Young man, please do not try to aid
With your advice the mighty Power that made
What little there is of you. There are still
Schemes you don't comprehend, and never will.
You're talented, I think; but no one cares
To have you help the Lord in His affairs.
Why, probably, right where that church has stood,
There'll soon be built another, twice as good;
And some mean, tight insurance company will
Perhaps be made to pay more'n half the bill.
The Lord knows, in these fool-confounding scenes,
When to rebuild, and where to get the means."

He turned away his head exceeding far,
And lit a little bit of white cigar;
But gave, "to such extent as I could see,"
No more of his theology to me.
I'm none too good; but when men jeer and flout,
I like to have them know what they're about.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

WHEN PROMETHEUS STOLE THE FLAME.

When Prometheus stole the flame,
Did he know what with it came?
Did he look afar and see
All the blessings that would be?
Could he view the gentle gloam
Of the fireside of a home?
Or the centre-table's blaze,
Turning evenings into days,
Where, encamped with quiet zest,
Happy children toil and rest?
Did he view the parlor's gleam,
Or the 'wildering palace dream?

See the torch's floating glare
Burn its way through walls of air;
Or, through under-regions trace
Earth's remotest hiding-place?
Did he see the flags of steam
O'er the cities flash and gleam?
To his vision, like a star,
Did the light-house gleam afar,
Which another eye should be
To the traveller of the sea?
If Prometheus, tortured—bound—
Knew the blessings man had found,
Then his sufferings must have been
Soothed by blessings from within.

When Prometheus stole the flame,
Did he know what with it came?
Did he see the fire up-steal,
Rise, and take its midnight meal?
Did he view the palace wall
Stumble 'mid the smoke and fall?
Did he see some cherished home
Feed a fiery ocean's foam?
Did he hear the war-alarms
Of a nation called to arms,
And behold men, in their ire,
Murdering men with bolts of fire?
Did some miscreant cross his sight,
Bent on booty or on spite,
Stealing steps into the dark,
With the incendiary spark?
Did there, faint and haggard, rise
Ghosts before his startled eyes,
Godly men of scathless name,
Felled for fuel to the flame;
In a short-lived earthly hell
Thrown, for voicing heaven too well?

If he knew that glittering thing
Would to Earth such curses bring,
Then his sufferings may have been
Edged with poison from within.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

MARCH 20, 18—.

Somehow, the fire I saw not long ago
Has subsequently chased me, high and low;
Runs back and forth betwixt my head and heart,
And shows no disposition to depart.

And so I've wandered 'round (too much, perhaps),
And got acquainted with the fireman chaps,
And planted good cigars where they would seem
Inclined to grow up helpful to my scheme.
(I never smoke; but, travelling near and far,
There's few things help one like a good cigar;
When safe between a neighbor's teeth 'tis hung,
It oils his ways and loosens up his tongue.
I get more from cigars, before it's through,
Than all the fellows that I give them to.
Perhaps they should not smoke; but, if they will,
My method helps their families foot the bill.)

Not long ago a sturdy fireman lad,
Who smoked up every last cigar I had,
Unrolled the following story to my view,
Which I believe (conditionally) true:

"FLASH:" THE FIREMAN'S STORY.

"Flash" was a white-foot sorrel, an' run on Number Three:
Not much stable manners—an average horse to see;
Notional in his methods—strong in loves an' hates;
Not very much respected, or popular 'mongst his mates.

Dull an' moody an' sleepy, an' "off" on quiet days;
Full o' turbulent, sour looks, an' small, sarcastic ways;
Scowled an' bit at his partner, an' banged the stable floor—
With other means intended to designate life a bore.

But when, be't day or night time, he heard the alarm-bell ring,
He'd rush for his place in the harness with a regular tiger spring;

"HE BEGGED THAT HORSE'S PARDON UPON HIS BENDED KNEES."

An' watch, with nervous shivers, the clasp of buckle an' band,
Until 'twas plainly evident he'd like to lend a hand.

An' when the word was given, away he would rush an' tear,
As if a thousand witches was rumplin' up his hair,
An' craze the other horses with his magnetic charm,
Till every hoof-beat sounded a regular fire-alarm!

Never a horse a jockey would notice an' admire
Like Flash in front of his engine a-runnin' to a fire;
Never a horse so lazy, so dawdlin', an' so slack,
As Flash upon his return trip, a-drawin' the engine back.

Now, when the different horses gets tender-footed an' old,
They're no use in our business; so Flash was finally sold
To quite a respectable milkman, who found it not so fine
A-bossin' one o' God's creatures outside it's natural line.

Seems as if I could see Flash a-mopin' along here now,
Feelin' that he was simply assistant to a cow;
But sometimes he'd imagine he heard the alarm-bell's din,
An' jump an' rear for a season before they could hold him in;

An' once, in spite o' his master, he strolled in 'mongst us chaps,
To talk with the other horses, of former fires, perhaps;
Whereat the milkman kicked him; whereat, us boys to please,
He begged that horse's pardon upon his bended knees.

But one day, for a big fire as we was makin' a dash,
Both o' the horses we had on somewhat resemblin' Flash,
Yellin' an' ringin' an' rushin', with excellent voice an' heart,
We passed the poor old fellow, a-tuggin' away at his cart.

If ever I see an old hoss grow upward into a new—
If ever I see a milkman whose traps behind him flew,
'Twas that old hoss, a-rearin' an' racin' down the track,
An' that respectable milkman a-tryin' to hold him back.

Away he rushed like a cyclone for the head o' "Number Three,"
Gained the lead, an' kept it, an' steered his journey free;
Dodgin' wagons an' horses, an' still on the keenest "silk,"
An' furnishin' all that neighborhood with good, respectable milk.

Crowd a-yellin' an' runnin', an' vainly hollerin' "Whoa!"
Milkman bracin' an' sawin', with never a bit o' show;
Firemen laughin' an' chucklin', an' shoutin' "Good! go in!"
Hoss a-gettin' down to it, an' sweepin' along like sin.

"AWAY HE RUSHED LIKE A CYCLONE FOR THE HEAD O' 'NUMBER THREE.'"

Finally came where the fire was—halted with a "thud;"
Sent the respectable milkman heels over head in mud;
Watched till he see the engines properly workin' there,
After which he relinquished all interest in the affair.

Moped an' wilted an' dawdled, "faded away" once more,
Took up his old occupation—considerin' life a bore;
Laid down in his harness, an'—sorry I am to say—
The milkman he had drawn there took his dead body away.

That's the whole o' my story: I've seen, more'n once or twice,
That poor dead animals' actions is full o' human advice;
An' if you ask what Flash taught, I'll simply answer, then,
That poor old horse was a symbol of some intelligent men.

An' if, as some consider, there's animals in the sky,
I think the poor old fellow is gettin' another try;
But if he should sniff the big fire that plagues the abode o' sin,
It'll take the strongest angel to hold the old fellow in.

March 20, 18—

Speaking of fires, my powers of language fail;
They run them here upon so large a scale.
My son, Charles Sumner (who is, by-the-way,
In Europe—terms ten dollars by the day,
Paid strictly in advance), can rhyme somewhat,
And often seems to me to touch the spot,
And light the truth up with a healthier glare,
And make it *truthfuller* for his being there.

(But in such furrows human nature runs,
That old men aren't good critics for their sons.)
He used to rush (as youngsters often will)
To every fire we had at Tompkins Hill,
And seemed to plan less how to put them out
Than to get something new to write about.
He struck a rhyme I think isn't over bad,
About a "fire" our little village had
(Or city; for that town took city airs
Before its village short-clothes reached repairs).
I found a copy of it t'other day
Where he had laid it carefully away,
To keep me from not finding it (he meant
To get it back in the next check I sent).
'Twill cost me several dollars yet, I fear;—
I'll paste the fellow's nonsense right in here:

HOW WE FOUGHT THE FIRE.

I.

'Twas a drowsy night on Tompkins Hill:
The very leaves of the trees lay still;
The world was slumbering, ocean deep;
And even the stars seemed half asleep,
And winked and blinked at the roofs below,
As yearning for morn, that they might go.
The streets as stolid and still did lie
As they would have done if streets could die;
The sidewalks stretched as quietly prone
As if a foot they had never known;
And not a cottage within the town,
But looked as if it would fain lie down.
Away in the west a stacken-cloud,
With white arms drooping and bare head bowed,
Was leaning against—with drowsy eye—
The dark blue velveting of the sky.

And that was the plight
Things were in that night,
Before we were roused the foe to fight—
The foe so greedy and grand and bright—
That plagued old Deacon Tompkins.

II.

The Deacon lay on his first wife's bed,
His second wife's pillow beneath his head,
His third wife's coverlet o'er him wide,
His fourth wife slumbering by his side.
The parson visioned his Sunday's text,
And what he should hurl at Satan next;
The doctor a drowsy half-vigil kept,
Still studying, as he partly slept,
How men might glutton, and tope, and fly
In the face of Death, and still not die;
The lawyer dreamed that his clients meant
To club together, and then present,
As proof that their faith had not grown dim,
A small bright silver hatchet to him;
The laborer such sound slumber knew,
He hadn't a dream the whole night through;
The ladies dreamed—but I can't say well
What 'tis they dream, for they never tell!
In short, such a general drowsy time
Had ne'er been known in that sleepy clime,
As on the night
Of clamor and fright,
We were roused the treacherous foe to fight—
The foe so greedy and grand and bright,
And carrying such an appetite—
That plagued old Deacon Tompkins.

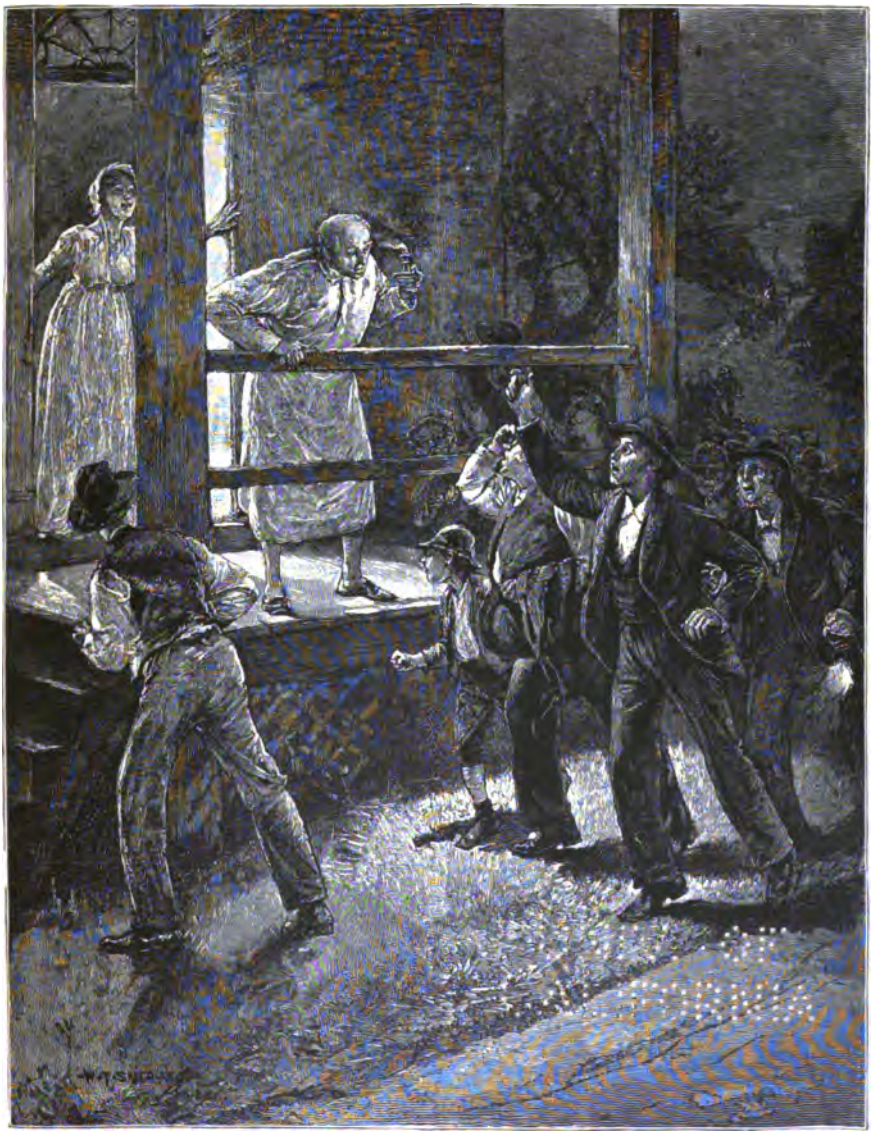
III.

When all at once the old court-house bell
(Which had a voice like a maniac's yell)
Cried out, as if in its dim old sight
The judgment-day had come in the night.

"Bang whang whang bang clang dang bang whang,"
The poor old parcel of metal sang;
Whereat, from mansion, cottage, and shed,
Rose men and women as from the dead,
In different stages of attire,
And shouted, "The town is all afire!"
(Which came as near to being true
As some more leisurely stories do.)
They saw on the Deacon's house a glare,
And everybody hurried there;
And such a lot of visitors he
Had never before the luck to see.
The Deacon received these guests of night
In a costume very simple and white;
And after a drowsy, scared "Ahem!"
He asked them what he could do for them.
"Fire! fire!" they shouted; "your house's afire!"
And then, with energy sudden and dire,
They rushed through the mansion's solitudes,
And helped the Deacon to move his goods.
And that was the sight
We had that night,
When roused by the people who saw the light
Atop of the cottage, cozy and white,
Where lived old Deacon Tompkins.

IV.

Ah me! the way that they rummaged round!
Ah me! the startling things they found!
No one with a fair idea of space
Would ever have thought that in one place
Were half the things that, with a shout,
These neighborly burglars hustled out.
Came articles that the Deacon's wives
Had all been gathering half their lives;
Came furniture such as one might see
Didn't grow in the trunk of every tree;
A tall clock, centuries old, 'twas said,
Leaped out of a window, heels o'er head;



HOW WE FOUGHT THE FIRE.

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A veteran chair, in which, when new,
George Washington sat for a minute or two;
A bedstead strong, as if in its lap
Old Time might take his terminal nap;
Dishes, that in meals long agone
The Deacon's fathers had eaten on;
Clothes, made of every cut and hue,
That couldn't remember when they were new;
A mirror, scathless many a day
('Twas promptly smashed in the regular way);
Old shoes enough, if properly thrown,
To bring good luck to all creatures known;
And children thirteen, more or less,
In varying plenitude of dress.
And that was the sight
We had that night,
When roused, the terrible foe to fight,
Which blazed aloft to a moderate height,
And turned the cheeks of the timid white,
Including Deacon Tompkins.

V.

Lo! where the engines, reeking hot,
Dashed up to the interesting spot:
Came Number Two, "The City's Hope,"
Propelled by a line of men and rope;
And after them, on a spiteful run,
"The Ocean Billows," or Number One.
And soon the two, induced to "play"
By a hundred hands, were working away,
Until, to the Deacon's flustered sight,
As he danced about in his robe of white,
It seemed as if, by the hand of Fate,
House-cleaning day were some two years late,
And with complete though late success,
Had just arrived by the night express.
The "Ocean Billows" were at high tide,
And flung their spray upon every side;

The "City's Hope" were in perfect trim,
Preventing aught like an interim;
And a "Hook-and-Ladder Company" came,
With hooks and ropes and a long hard name,
And with an iconoclastic frown
Were about to pull the whole thing down,
When some one raised the assuring shout,
"It's only the chimney a-burnin' out!"
Whereat, with a sense of injured trust,
The crowd went home in complete disgust.
Scarce one of those who, with joyous shout,
Assisted the Deacon in moving out,
Refrained from the homeward-flowing din,
To help the Deacon at moving in.
And that was the plight
In which, that night,
They left the Deacon, clad in white,
Who felt he was hardly treated right,
And used some words, in the flickering light,
Not orthodox in their purport quite—
Poor, put-out Deacon Tompkins!

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Let me a moment indite
Scenes that I witnessed one night:

["YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE IS CONRAD?"]

"You will tell me where is Conrad?" said an old man, bent and gray,
While the flames were wildly dancing, and the walls were giving way.

"I haf heard some ones was buried—underneath the ruins fell;
He was in de topmost story—ach, mein Gott! I luf him well!

"I will tell you how you knew him: he had full and laughing eye,
And his face was smooth and smiling—and he was too young to die.

"Hair he had like clouds at sunset when anodher day is done,
And I luf him—how I luf him! and he is mein only son.

"Say, Policeman, tell me truly that this young man you did see,
And I all the money gif you, such as I could bring with me.

"Tell me that he anxious acted—that he hunted far and long,
Like as children would be calling for their fadher in a throng;

"Or he wounded was, pray tell me—in the hospital to lie?—
I will just now hasten to him, and I not will let him die!

"Tell me—oh, you must not told me—dead you haf my Conrad see?
Yet if so is I can stand that—I did long a soldier be.

"Only—Death, we do not fear him when we hear the bullets sing,
But to haf my boy killed this way is a rather different thing.

"Only—that his poor old mudher, she waits home all full of fear,
And I cannot there be going, till I take good news from here!

"Young he was when we did bring him from the Rhine land o'er the sea;
I did lif for her and Conrad—she did lif for him and me.

"Other ones we bring not with us: Gott he says, 'These more be mine;'
And we left them all a-sleeping 'mong the vineyards of the Rhine.

"He haf not a cross word gif us—he haf luf us every day,
And if he to-night comes home not, 'tis the first that he's away.

"Let me to that fire, Policeman! I care what for walls or brand?
Maybe he in there be living—reaching for his fadher's hand!

"Let me past, I say, Policeman! I haf work there to be done!
Let go me or I will strike you!—is it that you haf no son?"

. . . . . .

Still the flames were like a furnace, and the walls were crashing loud,
And the old man, held in safety, fainted 'mid the trembling crowd.

And the mother watched and wondered, with her great eyes scarcely wet;
But, half dazed amid her sorrow, waits for Conrad even yet.

WATER.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

April 25, 18—

Rain—rain—rain—rain—for three good ~~solid~~ fluid weeks—
Till the air swims, and all creation leaks!
And street-cars furnish still less room to spare,
And hackmen several times have earned their fare.
The omnibuses lumber through the din,
And carry clay outside as well as in;
The elevated trains, with jerky care,
Haul half-way comfort through the dripping air;
The gutters gallop past the liquid scene,
As brisk as meadow brooks, though not so clean;
What trees the city keeps for comfort's sake,
Are shedding tears as if their hearts would break;
And water tries to get, by storming steady,
That fourth of all the world it hasn't already.

And men are not so sweet as men could wish,
In air that wouldn't offend a moderate fish;
Few places can be found, outside or in,
Where this dark-featured weather has not been;
For man has always striven, and in vain,
To roof his *disposition* from the rain.
I've strolled about, this morning, several miles,
'Mongst men who get their living by their smiles;
I've set my old umbrella up to drip
In places where I claimed relationship
(Or, rather, where my heart did; and that's more
Than blood connection is, sixteen times o'er);

I've journeyed up and down through half Broadway,
And did not see a first-class smile to-day.

And so, in spite of all that I can do,
These gold-bowed spectacles are growing blue;
And my old heart must bear along the road
A fanciful but rather heavy load;
A painful pressure from a hand unseen:
Most any one knows nearly what I mean.

I think I'll powder up this dark-skinned day,
By going, to-night, to hear the actors play!
They'll make me laugh, and tone me up a bit,
And get me out of this unnatural fit.

---

11 o'clock P. M.

Got back alive; and that's worth thinking on,
From where there's been such lots of killing done;
Mercy! it was a somewhat skittish sight—
So many people butchered in one night!
'Twas just a lot of people playing crime—
A sort of murder-picnic all the time.

We found the theatre with handbills spread,
Near where the notice in the paper said
(The weather had slacked up an hour or so,
And Wife thought she would condescend to go),
And after stumbling over several chaps,
Who thought they'd met us somewhere else, perhaps,
And cheerfully addressed us o'er and o'er,
As if they'd known us several years or more,
Persisting in affording us a chance
To buy our tickets at a slight advance
(The theatres employ these men, I've heard,
To greet their patrons with a friendly word,
And light their way in with kind word and smile,
And make a dollar out of them meanwhile);

We brushed past these remarkable "dead-beats,"
Some tickets bought, and scrambled to our seats.

After a piece of music by the band,
The curtain rose before a castle grand,
And soldiers talking, with a half-scared mien,
About a spook that one of them had seen.
When lo! this ghost appears, plump to their view,
And will not talk, although they beg him to.
(I whispered to my wife that I'd a freak
That a newspaper man could make him speak;
But suddenly my comments had to cease,
For Wife encouraged me to hold my peace.)

When lo! this ghost, who, thus far, might have come
Out of a sky-asylum for the dumb,
Speaks with a queer but rather human sound,
When once his son, the Prince, gets on the ground;
And taking him aside, ten feet almost,
Tells the poor boy that he's his father's ghost,
Whose own false brother softly to him crept,
And poured him full of poison while he slept.

Then the young man got mad, though to my mind
'Twas lunacy of quite a knowing kind;
And went to work with an apparent view
Of killing off 'most every one he knew.

I haven't the time his actions all to state;
I'll only say he managed it first-rate,
And some way killed all relatives he saw,
From uncle to prospective father-in-law;
And when he got through, those he hadn't snuffed out
Were hardly worth while bothering about.
(I mustn't forget to say that this poor elf
Became, at last, a good square corpse himself.)

I looked around, and, the whole building through,
Women were shedding tears as if 'twas true;

And Wife was 'most too much concerned to speak,
And even my old eyes had sprung a leak.
'Twas a moist time; and I remarked, "'Tis plain
We've come out of the rain into the rain."

I got so full of funeral, sitting there,
Then, when we once more sniffed the clean, live air,
It seemed a piece of good-luck all around,
To get away once more, alive and sound.

That's what they call a "tragedy;" where Death
Flies 'round till he himself gets out of breath;
And, with sword-slashes and cold poison filled,
All who amount to anything, get killed.
It's part of life; some time again I'll view it,
But take a good square rest before I do it!

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Here on this sea-beach I wander;
Why of the storms am I fonder
Than of the sunlight above them?
And the clouds: why do I love them—
Waves of the sky, onward sweeping,
Or to the ocean-waves leaping?
Why do I court this fierce day,
Dashing my face full of spray?
Why, when the waves strike the shore
With their strong, leonine roar,
Does my soul fiercely entreat them—
Rush out with rapture to meet them?
Why do I love to descry
War in the fields of the sky?
Why does the chain-lightning's glare,
Ploughing blue meadows of air,
Look to my vision alway
Sweet as a star in the day?

You who in fair summer weather
Seek this sea-city together
(Built for tumultuous rest,
With the famed ocean chief guest),
Not half the pleasure you've known,
That I, here wand'ring alone,
On these wet sand-fields have found,
Hearing the ocean's own sound,
Viewing fierce waves from afar
Strive with the winter in war.
Storms that tumultuously roll
Far through my innermost soul—
Here you encounter, at last,
Harmonies wondrous and vast!

What did I find on the shore?
Must I rehearse it once more?

[THE DEAD STOWAWAY.]

He lay on the beach, just out of the reach
  Of waves that had cast him by:
With fingers grim they reached for him
  As often as they came nigh.
The shore-face brown had a surly frown,
  And glanced at the dancing sea,
As if to say, "Take back the clay
  You tossed this morning at me."
Great fragments rude, by the shipwreck strewed,
  Had found by this wreck a place;
He had grasped them tight, and hope-strewn fright
  Sat still on the bloated face.
Battered and bruised, forever abused,
  He lay by the heartless sea,
As if Heaven's aid had never been made
  For a villain such as he.

The fetter's mark lay heavy and dark
  Around the pulseless wrists;
The hardened scar of many a war
  Clung yet to the drooping fists.
The soul's disgrace across that face
  Had built an iron track;
The half-healed gash of the jailman's lash
  Helped cover the brawny back.
The blood that flowed in a crimson road
  From a deep wound in his head
Had felt fierce pangs from the poison-fangs
  Of those who his young life fed:
Cursed from the very beginning
  With deeds that others had done,
"More sinned against than sinning"—
  And so is every one!

He had never learned save what had turned
  The steps of his life amiss;
He never knew a hand-grasp true,
  Or the thrill of a virtuous kiss.
'Twas poured like a flood through his young blood,
  And poisoned every vein,
That wrong is right, that law is spite,
  And theft but honest gain.
The seeds were grown that had long been sown
  By the heart of a murderous sire:
Disease and shame, and blood aflame
  With thirst for the founts of fire.
Battered and bruised, forever abused,
  He lay by the moaning sea,
As if Heaven's aid were even afraid
  Of a villain such as he.

As he lay alone, like a sparrow prone,
  An angel wandered nigh:
A look she cast over that dark past,
  And tears came to her eye.

"BATTERED AND BRUISED, FOREVER ABUSED,
HE LAY BY THE MOANING SEA."

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She bent by the dead, and tenderly said:
"Poor child, you went astray;
Your heart and mind were both born blind—
No wonder they lost their way!
Angels, I know, had fallen as low
With such a dismal chance.
Your heart was ironed, your soul environed,
You were barred of all advance!
Cursed from the very beginning
With deeds that others have done,
'More sinned against than sinning'—
And so is every one!"

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

MAY 24, 18--

The Lord gave Water quite a good-sized start—
Three-fourths of this world's homestead for its part;
But lawyers are not needed to convince
That Water has been losing ever since.
The reason is not hard to understand:
For God's most knowing creatures live on land,
And, naturally, every chance they get,
Find some new means to keep them from the wet.
The farms their dykes have from the ocean won;
The ground men make to build their cities on;
The bridge that from the river shelters me;
The ships—great travelling bridges of the sea—
All are an effort of ambitious man
To make this world as solid as he can.

These thoughts, to-day, all through my mind would run,
While looking at a bridge they've just got done,
Which takes a man, dry shod, from shore to shore—
A matter of a good long mile or more.
I can't describe it; but I'll let the papers
(Who tell *some* truth, 'mid all their fancy capers)

To my old scrap-book give of it a taste
(What I can't do with ink I'll do with paste).

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

[THE WEDDING OF THE TOWNS.]

Let all of the bells ring clear,
  And all of the flags be seen;
The King of the Western Hemisphere
  Has married the Island Queen!
For years he watched and waited
  Along the river side,
And vowed that she was fated
  To be his own fair bride;
Full many a night he wooed her
  Upon her lofty throne,
And he hath long pursued her,
  To make the prize his own;
Nor thankless his endeavor,
  Nor coy the royal maid,
But, like true-love's course ever,
  The banns were long delayed!

And boys to men had grown,
  And men their graves had sought;
The gulf was yet between them thrown,
  And the wooing came to nought.
Though couriers oft were dashing
  'Twixt him and his adored,
Still was the river flashing
  Between them like a sword.
In heart they well were mated;
  And patiently and long
They for each other waited—
  These lovers true and strong.

Let never a flag be hidden!
  Let never a bell be dumb!
The guests have all been bidden—
  The wedding-day has come!

For many a golden year
  Shall gleam this silvery tie:
The wondering world will gather here
  And gaze with gleaming eye.
Philosophers will ponder
  How, blessed by the hand of Heaven,
The world has another wonder
  To add to its famous seven;
Philanthropists will linger
  To view the giant span,
And point with grateful finger
  Where man has toiled for man;
And all will bless the year
  When, in the May-month green,
The King of the Western Hemisphere
  Was wed to the Island Queen!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

JULY 2, 18—

Wealth, wealth, wealth, wealth! with iron bars to defend it,
And seventeen hundred thousand ways to spend it!
How men will work, in home and foreign lands,
To get a lot of money in their hands;
How they will bar and bolt, by night and day,
To keep some one from stealing it away;
Then, when a fresh bait strikes their fancy's eye,
How easy 'tis to make them let it fly!
Lock up your cash in places howe'er strong,
You lose it when the right thief comes along.

There are some families that I could name,
Who, spring and fall and winter, toil the same
As boys with sleds for half an hour will climb,
To ride back in about five minutes' time.
These fam'lies pinched and starved nine months will be,
To make a first-class show the other three;
And some whose fortunes sprung up like a flame,
Can puff it out even quicker than it came.

These thoughts grew like June corn the other day,
As I through Coney Island picked my way,
And found there, pert and prosperous as could be,
A land-and-water city by the sea;
And people holding, in free easy style,
A Fourth-of-July picnic all the while.
Thousands were eating there amid the din,
As though they'd hardly time to do it in;
Thousands were loitering in the breezy air,
As if they had a year or two to spare;
And every trap that ever caught a dime,
Was ready set and baited all the time!

The ocean, to my unaccustomed view,
Seemed having quite a lively picnic too;
The waves came slamming at us with a roar,
And chased each other pell-mell to the shore.
And in these waves, and adding to the noise,
A lot of men and women, girls and boys,
Dressed in a style that made my good wife frown,
Like big-sized corks went bobbing up and down.
Some glided out and in, like jumping-jacks,
Some rode the waves—a-lying on their backs;
And some—as decent folks as one could see—
Made capers that were very queer to see.
I noticed Miss Doozéll, much versed in books,
And quite particular about her looks,
And dignified as any one I know,
Roll over maybe thirteen times or so;

While Jeremiah Jipson, LL.D.,
Who seldom makes a move above the knee,
And who, all former signs would seem to say,
Never indulges in unseemly play—
When an irreverent wave he chanced to meet,
Stood on his head, and raised aloft his feet.
The Ocean has no awe for any one,
And always seems to get more'n half the fun.

But how the pretty children carry sail!
Each with his tiny shovel and his pail,
Each working his own little piece of land,
And making small plantations in the sand!
These little incidents show on their face
That farming's natural to the human race!

When God's poor pretty ones, 'mid summer's blaze,
Have lived 'mongst brick and mortar all their days,
Trying their best to blossom and not spoil,
Like house-plants kidnapped from their native soil,
It must be heaven to sit here in the sand,
And take old Mother Earth right by the hand!
To lie here, by no brick blocks overlooked,
And take a breath of air that hasn't been cooked!
God bless you, children! May't a long time be,
Before the sand shall cover you and me!

Yes, every trap that ever caught a dime
Is ready set and baited, all the time!
Here nigh the shore a strange machine I found,
To see how hard, with beetles, men could pound;
And several fellows tried it, o'er and o'er,
Who never handled labor so before,
And would have shown capacity to shirk,
If they had known how much it looked like work.
Here round and round I saw a big wheel go,
Like an old-fashioned horse-power—larger, though,
And worked by steam; and on the sweeps one finds
Big wooden animals of different kinds:

Elephants, horses, birds of various hues,
Lions and leopards, roosters, kangaroos—
All staring with great, stupid, wondering eyes,
And all about the very self-same size!
And on these beasts, sixteen times round or more,
Rode children of from fifty down to four,
While some big-sized hand-organ filled the air
With crack-voiced music, plenty and to spare.
Here a big premium cow—quite dead, alas!
Gave milkman's milk-and-water by the glass;
Here were some great "museums," which consisted
Of wondrous things that never have existed;
There omnibuses hover on your track,
Ready to draw you somewhere else—and back;
Here "marine railroads," as you onward plod,
Will take you riding at five cents a rod;
This "elevator" lifts you pretty high,
And shows you men must look small from the sky;
Yon gambling den will send you from its door,
Poorer and not much wiser than before;
That fellow there will, in an ocean view,
Your picture take, and swear that it is you.
Yes, every trap that ever caught a dime,
Is ready set and baited, all the time!

And sometimes everything seems blurred, indeed,
With man's surprising wickedness and greed,
Till you most feel there's nothing genuine there,
Excepting ocean waves and open air!

But still they can't put all God's plans to death
To let the people have an honest breath;
And so, while thinking it all up, to-day,
I finally felt called upon to say,
Thank the good Lord, from whom all blessings fall,
For making Coney Island, after all!

My cousin, Abdiel Stebbins, large and slow,
Arrived at Ocean Grove some days ago;

He stopped off in this city on the way,
And stayed here with us two weeks and one day
(For we keep up our airy home in town
Whether the mercury goes up or down—
Not liking to exchange it very well
For a small sweat-box in a large hotel).
He promised that the first hour he could spare
He'd write us how he liked it over there;
The letter, like himself, is rather queer;
Perhaps I'd better paste it right in here:

[FARMER STEBBINS AT OCEAN GROVE.]

OCEAN GROVE, *June* 30, 18—

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

We got here safe—my worthy wife and me—
And took a tent here in the woods contigious to the sea;
We've harvested such means of grace as growed within our reach—
We've been to several meetings here, and heard the Bishop preach;
And everything went easy like until we took a whim—
My wife and I—one breezy day, to take an ocean swim.

We shouldn't have ventured on't, I think, if Sister Sunnyhopes
Hadn't urged us over and again, and said she knew "the ropes,"
And told how soothing it would be "in ocean rills to lave,"
And "sport within the bounding surf," and "ride the crested wave;"
And so we went along with her—my timid wife and me—
Two inland noodles, for our first acquaintance with the sea.

They put me in a work-day rig, as usually is done—
A wampus and short overalls all sewed up into one.
I had to pull and tug and shrink to make the thing go 'round
(You are aware my peaceful weight will crowd three hundred pound).
They took my wig and laid it up—to keep it dry, they said—
And strapped a straw-stack of a hat on my devoted head.

They put my wife into a frock too short by full a third:
'Twas somewhat in the Bloomer style—I told her 'twas absurd!

You know she's rather long and slim—somewhat my opposite—
And clothes that was not made for her is likely not to fit;
But as we was we vent'red in—my timid wife and me—
And formed our first acquaintance with the inconsistent sea.

Miss Sunnyhopes she waded out a-looking nice and sweet
(She'd had her dress made to the store, and trimmed from head to feet);

And I went next, and grabbed their rope just as she told me to,
And Wife came third, a-looking scared, scarce knowing what to do.
Then Sister Sunnyhopes a smile of virgin sweetness gave,
And said, "Now watch your chance, and jump—here comes a *lovely* wave!"

I must have jumped, I rather think, the wrong time of the moon;
At any rate the "lovely wave" occurred to me too soon!
It took me sudden, with a rude and unexpected shock;
I'd rather meet the stoutest pair of horns in all my flock!

And then to top the circus out, and make the scene more fine,
I tried to *kick* this "lovely wave," and let right go the line.

On county fairs and 'lection days, in walking through a crowd,
I'm rather firm to jostle 'gainst—perhaps it makes me proud;

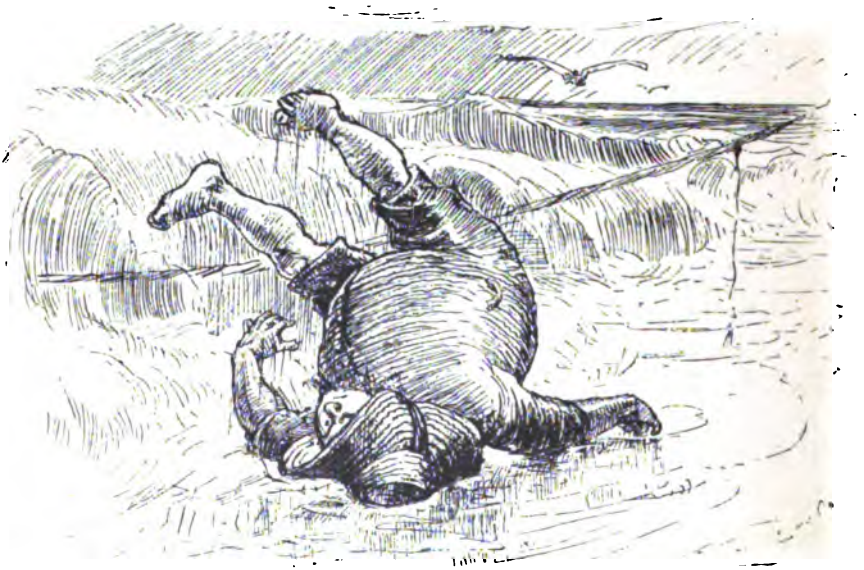
"TWO INLAND NOODLES, FOR OUR FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE SEA."

But if it does, that wave just preached how *sureness* never pays,
And seemed to say, "How small is man, no odds how much he weighs!"
It kicked and cuffed me all about, in spite of right or law,
With all the qualities they give an average mother-in-law!

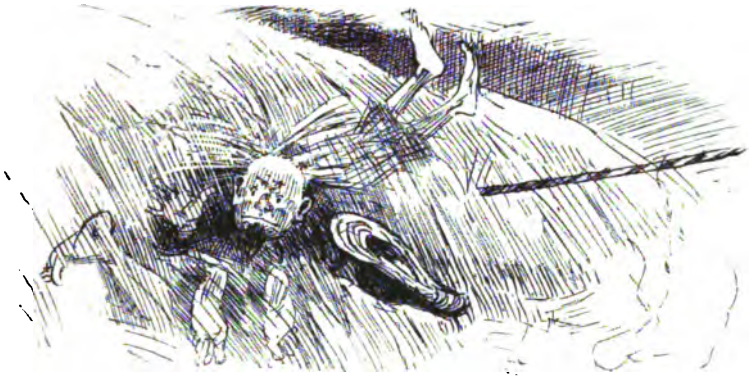
And then it set me on the bank, quite thankful for my life,
And looking 'round I give a gaze to find my faithful wife;
But she had kind o' cut this wave with all the edge she had,
And stood a-looking 'round for me, uncommon moist and sad;
While Sister Sunnyhopes with smiles was looking sweet and gay,
A-floating on her dainty back some several rods away!

She looked so newish pretty there—(she knowed it, too, the elf!)—
The crowd was all admiring her, and so was I myself;

And while I once more grasped the line, beside my wife of truth,
My eyes *would* rove to Sister S.—her beauty and her youth;



When all at once a brindle wave, uncommon broad and deep,
Came thrashing down on Wife and me, and flopped us in a heap!



Heels over head—all in a bunch—my wife across of me,
And I on some misguided folks who happened there to be;
My hat untied and floated off, and left my bald head bare—
When I got out, if I'd have spoke, 'twould warmed up all the air!

"WE VOTED THAT WE'D HAD ENOUGH."

We drank 'bout two-thirds of the sea—my gasping wife and I—
While Sister S. still floated soft, a-gazing at the sky!

We voted that we'd had enough, and got right out the way
Before another wave arrived, and bid the sea good-day.
We looked as like two drownded rats as ever such was called,
With one of them a dumbed old fool and most completely bald.
But, like a woman true she says—my shivering wife to me—
"We will not mind; there's others here looks just as bad as we."

Now, Sister Sunnyhopes, by'm-by, came back into our tent,
As sleek or sleeker than before, and asked us "When we went?"
Said I, "My dear good Sister S., please do not now pretend
You did not see our voyage through, and mark its doleful end.
If you would play the mermaid fair, why such I'd have you be;
But we're too old to take that part—my faithful wife and me;

"Some folks may be who ocean waves are fitted to command,
But we've concluded *we* was built expressly for the land.
And when I want amusement for an uncompleted day,
I guess I'll go and take it in some good old-fashioned way;
And will not stand upon my head 'fore all the folks that's there,
And wildly wave my dumbed old feet in all the neighboring air!"

VICE.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

SEPTEMBER 10, 18—.

AH me! it makes a sinner wondrous blue,
To see so many other sinners too!
When I rake over all my faults, and then
Notice the same, or worse, in other men,
It makes me very much surprised and sad,
That Heaven should see Earth turning out so bad!

Vice, vice, vice, vice! The *country's* mean enough,
And has some villains that are pretty rough;
But in this town, where art and nature both
Are shoved into their very greatest growth,
And where the utmost of all things is found,
The Devil has his best men on the ground,
And gives them weapons meeting his own views,
And all the ammunition they can use!

Vice, vice, vice, vice! I never had been led
To think that Evil had so long a head!
I've seen more ingenuity displayed
In one crime, than 'twould take to learn a trade.
Such cute inventions Sin will take in charge:
Old Satan's patent-office must be large!

And yet, for all their craft, in time how brief
How many of these rascals come to grief!
For though within them cunning may abound,
The plain-clothed Truth is always standing round,
Or following rogues through every land and clime,
And gets them, if you'll only give him time.

I don't believe—as some good people say—
The Devil leads men on from day to day,
And takes them to a rock, and, first they know,
Pitches them off into some gulf below;
Or baits them into different traps, and then
Doesn't try at all to get them out again:
I think he'd like to keep them, safe and sound,
Doing his nasty work the whole year round;
And when a rogue fails up and comes to grief,
It hurts his brimstone-clothed but helpless chief!

These thoughts limped past my saddened mind to-day,
As through State's prison I pursued my way,
Led round by one who didn't seem to be knowing
What melancholy pictures he was showing!
Those walls and guards, that all escape opposed;
Those thick, iron doors—it thundered when they closed;
The cells—each one a closet full of gloom:
I'd just as soon sleep in a metal tomb! *
The hard-faced men who worked away (no doubt,
For fear of hard-faced men that stood about),
Wearing that garb of stripes a free man loathes,
As if Law whipped them—even with their clothes;
The way they glance up at you from within
Their drooping eyelids, hard with grief or sin,
Wondering, as they gaze upon you so,
If you are not some one they used to know;
The ghosts you feel, that creep 'round, all the time,
Among these men who've shaken hands with crime;
The mournful hope that some are toiling here
Whose innocence in heaven is proved out clear:
All these things to my inmost spirit talked,
As through those regions dark I slowly walked;
And when the front door closed behind me—free—
The fresh air seemed like heaven itself to me!

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* And yet 'twas quite affecting, I declare,
How some had ornaments up, even there!
Not crime itself, or sad misfortune's smart
Can crush all sense of beauty from the heart!

I recollect once getting sick with pain,
When sitting near a sheriff, on the train,
Who had a young man with him—not of age—
Whom he was taking to this stone-bound cage.
The poor boy talked to him with drooping head,
And these are something like the words he said:

[THE BOY CONVICT'S STORY.]

I'd rather sit here, Mr. Sheriff—up near to the end of the car;
We won't do so much advertising if we stay in the seat where we are.
That sweet little dude saw the bracelets that you on my wrists have bestowed,
And tells the new passengers promptly you're "taking me over the road."
I've had a well-patronized trial—the neighbors all know of my fall;
But when I get out among strangers I'm sensitive-like, after all.

For I was a lad of good prospects, some three or four summers ago—
There wasn't any boy in our township who made a more promising show!
I learned all of Solomon's proverbs, and took in their goodness and worth,
Till I felt like a virtue-hooped barrel, chock-full of the salt of the earth.
And this precious picnic of sorrow would likely enough have been saved,
If I had had less of a heart, sir, or home had contained what it craved.

For the time when a boy is in danger of walking a little bit wild,
Is when he's too young to be married—too old to be known as a child;
A bird in the lonely grass thickets, just out of the parent tree thrown,
Too large to be kept in the old nest—too small to have one of his own;
When, desolate 'mid his companions, his soul is a stake to be won;
'Tis then that the Devil stands ready to get a good chance to catch on!

Oh, yes! I'd a good enough home, sir, so far as the house was concerned:
My parents were first-class providers—I ate full as much as I earned.
My clothes were all built of good timber, and fit every day to be seen;
There wasn't any lock on the pantry—my bedroom was tidy and clean;

And taking the home up and down, sir, I'd more than an average part,
With one quite important exception—*there wasn't any room for my heart.*

The house couldn't have been any colder, with snow-drifts in every room!
The house needn't have been any darker to make a respectable tomb!
I used to stop short on the door-step, and brace up a minute or more,
And bid a good-bye to the sunshine, before I would open the door;
I used to feed daily on icebergs—take in all the freeze I could hold—
Then go out and warm in the sunshine, because my poor heart was so cold!

And hadn't I a father and mother? Oh yes! just as good as they make—
Too good, I have often suspected (though maybe that last's a mistake).
But they'd travelled so long and so steady the way to Perfection's abode,
They hadn't any feeling for fellows who could not as yet find the road;
And so, till some far advanced mile-post on goodness's pike I could win,
They thought of me, not as their own child, but as one of the children of sin.

And hadn't I brothers and sisters? Oh yes! till they somewhat had grown;
Then, shivering, they went off and left me to stand the cold weather alone.
For I had the luck to be youngest—the last on the family page,
The one to prop up the old roof-tree—the staff of my parents' old age;
Who well understood all the uses to which a mere staff is applied;
They used me whenever convenient—then carelessly threw me aside!

And hadn't I any associates? Oh yes! I had friends, more or less,
But seldom I asked them to visit our house with the slightest success;
Whenever the project was mentioned, they'd somehow look blue like and chill,
And mention another engagement they felt it their duty to fill;
For—now I am only a convict, there's no harm in telling the truth—
My home was a fearful wet blanket to blood that was seasoned with youth!

Not one blessèd thing that was cheerful; no festivals, frolics, or games;
No novels of any description—'twas wicked to mention their names!
My story-books suddenly vanished, my checker-boards never would keep,
No newspaper came through *our* doorway unless it was first put to sleep!
And as for love—well, that old song, sir, is very melodious and fine,
With "No place like home" in the chorus—I hope there ain't many like mine!

And so, soon my body got hating a place which my soul couldn't abide,
And Pleasure was all the time smiling, and motioning me to her side;
And when I start out on a journey, I'm likely to go it by leaps,
For good or for bad, I'm no half-way—I'm one or the other for keeps.
My wild oats flew thicker and faster—I reaped the same crop that I sowed,
And now I am going to market—I'm taking it over the road!

Yes, it grieved my good father and mother to see me so sadly astray,
They deeply regretted my downfall—in a strictly respectable way;
They gave me some more admonition, and sent me off full of advice,
And wondered to see such a villain from parents so good and precise.
Indeed I have often conjectured, when full of neglect and its smarts,
I must have been left on the door-step of their uncongenial hearts!

My home in the prison is waiting—it opens up clear to my sight;
Hard work and no pay-day a-coming, a close cell to sleep in at night.
And there I must lie sad and lonesome, with more tribulation than rest,
And wake in the morning with sorrow sharp sticking like steel in my breast;
But maybe the strain and the trouble won't quite so much o'er me prevail,
As 'twould be to some one who wasn't brought up in a kind of a jail!

You've got a good home, Mr. Sheriff, with everything cosy and nice,
And 'tisn't for a wrist-shackled convict to offer *you* words of advice;
But this I *must* say, of all places your children may visit or call,
Make HOME the most pleasant and happy—the sweetest and best of them all;

For the Devil won't offer a dollar to have his world-chances improved,
When Home is turned into a side-show, with half the attractions removed!

Don't think I'm too bitter, good sheriff—I like you: you've been very good;
I'm ever and ever so grateful—would pay it all back if I could.
I didn't mean to slander my parents—I've nothing against their good name,
And as for my unrighteous actions, it's mostly myself that's to blame;
Still, *if I'd had a home*— But the prison is only one station ahead—
I'm done, Mr. Sheriff; forget me, but *don't* forget what I have said!

SEPTEMBER 15, 18—

Vice, vice, vice, vice!—and 'tisn't all clear and free,
Where any one can take a look and see,
And then decide, immediate, on the spot,
Whether he'll buy his soul-farm there or not;
It's scattered round about so 'mongst the good,
Folks can't entirely shun it when they would.
Much better to escape it we'd be able,
If 'twas obliged to carry 'round a label
(It always does, some time before it ages,
But not enough so in its early stages).

My mind was led around about this way,
By a well-dressed young man I met to-day,
Who strove to twist some money out of me,
But had, instead, a first-class lecture free.

My cousin, Abdiel Stebbins, large and good,
Inclined to do even better than he should,
And with a heart that gets him into scrapes
Of a most strange variety of shapes,
But who, before they've run a fatal course,
Always gets out of them by sheer main force,
Wrote me two letters, several years ago,
Which I have kept, with no intent to show,

But simply to read over now and then
As part of my text-book entitled "Men."

I think I'll get my cousin's wail by letter,
And paste it here where I can find it better.

[FARMER STEBBINS ON THE BOWERY.]

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

We got here safe—my worthy wife an' me,
An' then I looked the village through to see what I could see:
I rode upon the cur'us track with stations all up-stairs;
I walked through Wall Street all its length, an' saw no bulls or bears;
I patronized a red-nosed chap with manners very queer,
Who hadn't had a thing to eat for somethin' like a year;

I saw the road commissioners to work upon a bridge
A million times as large as that we built at Tompkins' Ridge—
(I'm told that they are makin' it, though maybe that's all fun,
To use the coming century, an' hope to get it done)—
When who should up an' grasp my hand, with face of genuine joy,
But Cousin Jeroboam Jones, my cousin's oldest boy!

I had not seen him years an' years—no wonder he looked strange;
His face an' form in some respects had undergone a change;
But then there wasn't a chance of doubt that that was him, because,
If not, how should he ever know that I was who I was?
We brushed our old acquaintance up, an' soon was at our ease,
A-wanderin' all about the place, as cozy as you please.

It's nicer far, in foreign towns, than 'tis to be alone,
To walk with one whose blood proceeds from sources near your own;
A sim'lar temp'rature of heart, a sort of family ease,
Enables you to work your tongue as lib'ral as you please;
And so I found myself quite soon uncommonly at home,
Describin' all my business through to Cousin Jerobo'm.

He listened very docile like, an' hadn't much to say,
But what he did was vent'red in a satisfact'ry way;
He'd severed somewhat from his kin, an' sort o' lost the run,
But he recalled the Stebbinses, when mentioned, one by one;
An' takin' him inside an' out, our family scarcely owns
A relative more relishin' than Jeroboam Jones.

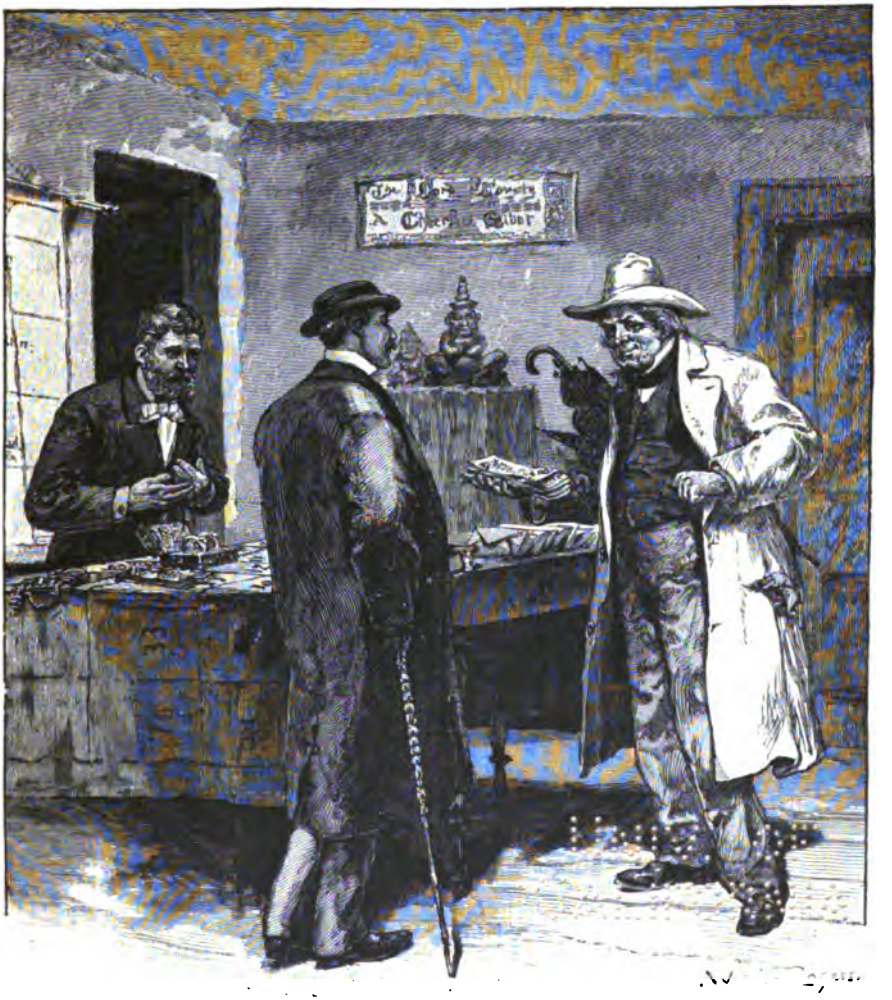
He's teacher in a Sunday-school, he told me, by the way,
Which has a room, above a store, that's open every day.
"For if," he says, "we come across a child that needs our care,
We cannot wait till Sunday comes—we join 'em then an' there.
An' if you want to see the way our worthy cause is run,
Come in an' take a little look—our 'social's' just begun."

The scholars hadn't come, as yet; the Superintendent, though,
Was sittin' at a table, like, an' bowed extremely low;
An' heard the praise on poor old me my cousin had to tell,
An' said he joyed to meet a friend of one he loved so well;
An' I talked back; an' for a time our converse did not cease—
A regular three-cornered gush of friendship, love, an' peace.

An' then he showed me how they run their "grab-bags" an' all such
(We have the same at home, you know, although not near so much);
An' then he had some val'ables on numbers that you saw,
With figures correspondin'ly, in envelopes, to draw;
I gin him fifty cents to help a cause I dearly hold,
An' drew a velvet hymn-book, with a clasp resemblin' gold!

My cousin pressed my hand with some congratulatin' jokes,
And said, "Ah me! the Stebbinses was always lucky folks!
But after all, their *shrewdness* is the thing that lets them win."
(Which made me proud, though I didn't see just where the shrewd came in.
But buyin' a five-dollar book at that unheard-of price,
An' helpin' of the cause meanwhile, was unsuspected nice.)

Whereat the Superintendent said, "You're lucky, I allow;
I'll have to charge five dollars for a chance to draw here now."



"TO MAKE FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS CLEAR, AN' HELP THE CHILDREN TOO."

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Whereat my cousin Jeroboam remarked, "If 'tisn't wrong,
I'll buy a draw for Cousin Steb, to help the cause along."
I shook my head, but he *would* do't; an' sure as I'm alive,
I drawed a good ten-dollar bill for Cousin Jones's five!

Whereat the Superintendent said, "You're lucky men, I vow;
A hundred dollars I must charge for every drawing now;"
An' fingerin' the envelopes, one opened—just a grain—
And I discerned the number 11, uncommon black and plain;

"WE COME 'THIN PART OF ONE OF IT."

An' on the *other* number 11 by glancin' I could see
Five good crisp hundr'd-dollar bills a-waitin' there for me!

To make four hundred dollars clear, an' help the children too,
Was somethin' that would surely seem desirable to do;
With an unfailin' eagle eye, a heart that swelled with hope,
I watched, an' saw the very place he put that envelope;
I winked at Cousin Jeroboam, I counted out the cash,
An' drawed, an' had that card revealed almost as quick as flash!

Oh, sakes!—the second figure 1 had what I hadn't seen,
A *tail* that made a 7 of it! 'twas Number 17!
An' on them figures on the board there nothin' was, in fact,
Except a little pamphlet like—an anti-gamblin' tract;
Which hadn't any money wuth, an' won't be good for much,
Except to keep my older boys from playin' cards an' such.

Now Cousin Jeroboam Jones was buried in surprise,
An' walked a half a mile with me, an' helped philosophize;
An' says, "You come some other day—we'll try that thing agin:
We come 'thin *part of one of it*—the next time we shall win."
Then, nearin' to a corner, he took kindly leave o' me,
Because of some new scholars there that he must go an' see.

I give you this experience, John, but please don't tell it now;
Let Tompkins take the chestnut horse, an' sell the brindle cow;
An' gather up what cash besides I have a-lyin' loose,
An' send the whole of it to me for my immediate use.
Do everything concerned in this, in soft, secretive tones;
Direct it to New York, in care of Jeroboam Jones.

A. S.

A few days, and the following one arrived,
Which shows Sin's triumph sometimes is short-lived:

[FARMER STEBBINS AHEAD.]

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

I'm very glad you sent that money through,
By Cousin Seth, an' not by mail, as I requested you!
The fam'ly's just so much ahead: 'twere best it never came,
If Jeroboam Jones had twined his fingers 'round the same.
For that young man has principles fit only to abhor,
And isn't the kind of relative that I was lookin' for!

My sakes! Millennium's nowhere near, when men so false can be
As to equivocate themselves into my family tree;

An' on its honest branches graft the shoots of their design,
An' make me think they're good because they're relatives of mine;
While under those fraternal smiles a robber's frown is hid;
But that's the inappropriate thing that Jeroboam did!

When Cousin Seth the tavern reached whose clerk o'ershadows me,
He cried, "Where is my long-lost son I've come so far to see?"
An' so, to fill that father's heart with resurrected joy,
I twisted 'round with him a bit, to try an' find the boy;
An' comin' where I had the luck that hymn-book for to win,
I opened quietly the door, an' both of us went in.

The Superintendent still was there; he gave a little start,
But welcomed us, apparently, with overflowin' heart;
An' told us all about the work, an' how 'twas gettin' on,
An' how much money those who gave unto the cause had won;
But Cousin Seth, though much impressed with what he heard an' saw,
Said he didn't fix the envelopes, an' b'lieved he wouldn't draw.

Just then the door was opened quick, an' with a solemn grin,
Young Jeroboam Jones appeared, an' sidled softly in;
An' with him was an older man, who looked enough like me
To've been a reg'lar Stebbins too, so far as one could see;
But slappin' Seth upon the back, I said, "My duty's done,
For this is Jeroboam Jones, your long-lost oldest son!"

"My 'long-lost oldest son?'" said he: "he's 'bout as much my son
As you are the belovèd babe of Gen'ral Washington!
It strikes me that my married life was very much amiss,
If I'm responsible for such a sneakin' face as this!
He's blinded you by his supposed relationship to me:
He's no one I have ever seen, or ever want to see!"

As when a fog above a field the sudden breezes tore,
You spied a thousand things you did not even miss before,
So all the facts of this affair, as clear as summer skies,
Straightway arranged themselves before my reconstructed eyes:
That these were not veracious men; an' this no Sunday-school;
An' naught was what it seemed, except one old bald-headed fool!

I held those two deceivers out, with unassisted strength,
An' by the collar shook each one to my arm's farthest length;
They gasped an' danced an' skipped around, without a word to say—
They "put their heads together" in a new an' painful way.
"Due ninety dollars fifty cents, an' not a penny less!"
I shouted; "an' I'll send you back your hymn-book by express!"

When finally in my discourse a breathin' pause occurred,
The Superintendent counted out the cash, without a word;
Which, with a manner dignified, I coldly repossessed,
An', still retainin' Jeroboam, that scamp I thus addressed:
"An' so you are the bogus friend and relative, so free
To spend his time a-makin' fools of poor old men like me.

"I'm Supervisor of the town where I have lived so long:
There ain't a man in all that part will say I've done him wrong;
There ain't a man will claim but what I'm ordinary keen;
But when I plant myself in town, I grow exceedin' green.
An' any kind-expressioned man, who acts a civil part,
Can always find my soul to home, an' house-room in my heart.

"It's sad for such a smile as yours to find so mean a fate;
An' there's *some* good in you—at least enough to use for bait;
Without *some* kindness in your heart, you couldn't have landed me;
An' as to how you've used your gifts, just pause a bit an' see.
I've gambled, by you're callin' it a charitable name,
And my self-valuation sunk with unaccustomed shame.

"I've done what I'd have whipped my boys for even lookin' at;
An' don't suppose but what I own part of the blame for that;
I thought I saw a chance to make five dollars out o' one,
Which, with strict justice all around, is very seldom done.
But up to that outrageous point, remember, I was led
By your assumed relationship, an' several things you said.

"Do you reflect, young man, upon the fruit you're growin' to?
There's prison gates a-waitin' now to stand in front of you.
There's grief of unexpected kinds, an' every sort of shame,
To send you some time from this world much poorer than you came.

"THEY 'PUT THEIR HEADS TOGETHER' IN A NEW AN' PAINFUL WAY."

Your guilty head you hang before us sinners standin' by:
What angle do you s'pose 'twould take 'mongst angels in the sky?

"There's hope e'en on the death-bed for a square, straightforward thief,
But *Judases* have always come to most peculiar grief;

"HE MAKES HIMSELF A BIGGER FOOL THAN ALL THE FOOLS HE MAKES."

The Lord has pity, I suppose, for errin' men an' weak,
But no good satisfact'ry place in which to put a sneak.
An' when a man wins men's esteem, then thrives by their mistakes,
He makes himself a bigger fool than all the fools he makes."

Then my adopted relative I seated in a chair,
With amply necessary help, an' sev'ral pounds to spare.
Then Seth an' I with dignity bade both the scamps good-day,
Advisin' them to gain their bread in some dissimilar way;
An' as we thundered down the stairs, with heavy rural tread,
I felt that I'd at last come out some several rods ahead.

A. S.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

[THE "SLUGGING"-MATCH.]

"A first-class professional fight!"
  I'm really doing the town!
There were thousands on thousands to-night
  To see a man knock a man down.
Two dollars I willingly (?) paid
  To view all this muscle and brawn;
'Twas rather too much, I'm afraid,
  Or seemed so, the minute 'twas gone.

And yet 'tis a study to see
  The rage gladiatorial of Rome
And grim Spanish bull-baiting glee
  Adopt an American home!
That blood-thirsty, murderous spite
  Men loudly condemn—and possess!
Besieged New York City last night,
  With first-class financial success!

Hands gloved—to comply with the law;
  Gloves hard—to comply with the crowd;
Fists savage as murder could draw;
  Cheers heavy and fervent and loud.

Stern hisses, and shoutings of "Woman!"
  When either too tender they found;
Tremendous applause when a foeman
  Dropped, more than half dead, on the ground.

'Twas the soul's blackest hell-woven fibre,
  All thrilling intensely and fast;
The curse of the Tagus and Tiber
  Arrived in New York Bay at last!
And victor and vanquished, I learn,
  Came off with more glittering spoil
Than teacher or preacher could earn
  In years of the hardest of toil.

A spectacle pleasing and bright,
  Full many good people delighting—
So many good men love a fight,
  When somebody else does the fighting!
And "'tis shameful!" we mildly agree,
  And shout our complainings afar;
But the facts are no worse than are we:
  They show to us just what we are!

VIRTUE.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

October 1, 18—.

Wind in the south-west; weather fit to stay;
A sweet, old-fashioned, Indian-summer day—
When Heaven and Earth both seem to look at you
Through hair of gold and misty eyes of blue.
My wife said, as we talked of it together,
It seemed as if some of our old farm weather
Had got tired of the sober hills of brown,
Hitched up a cloud, and driven into town!

We went to church, and heard a sermon preached,
Which all the way from Earth to Heaven reached,
And lifted us up toward the town divine,
Till we could almost see the steeples shine,
And hear the mighty chariots as they rolled
Along the massive turnpikes made of gold.
We had some music, so sweet-lipped and true
It made me think of every flower I knew;
And when, with benediction, the old pastor
Said "Good-bye" for himself, but not his master,
It put my resolution to the rack,
To head my poor old tears, and drive them back!

We tried to come straight out, as Christians should,
And bring away all of it that we could;
But there were certain persons there to-day,
Who, after church was over, clogged the way,
And, standing 'round, with worldly nods and smiles,
Held a week-day reception in the aisles.

Now, when one's mind falls in celestial frame,
He wants to get home safely with the same;
And hates through jostling gossipers to walk,
And stumble 'gainst the smallest kinds of talk,
Intended, by some power, his mind to bring
Down out of Heaven to every worldly thing—
From office, and good methods to ensure it,
To rheumatism, and proper means to cure it.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

These are the spires that were gleaming
All through my juvenile dreaming;
Here the high belfries are singing:
Gold invitations they're winging,
Asking man through the charmed portal,
Where he is once more immortal;
Where he may hide from his cares,
Under a shelter of prayers.
Why do these halls, high and broad,
Under the same constant God,
Vary in structure and style—
Differ, from chancel to aisle?
Why forms and creeds so diverse?
Why is my blessing your curse?
Pondering here on the street,
This is one reason I meet:

Man's brain is devious and strange—
Differs, in form and in range;
So that God's fervid love-sun,
Falling the same on each one,
Differs in form and in hue,
(Not the less precious or true)!
Body and brain and heart—
Temple of infinite art—

You had no power to control
Hues of your windows of soul!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

OCTOBER 5, 18—.

Sweet virtue, virtue, virtue!—what a start
You've got here in this city's feverish heart!
There isn't a thing to do that's square and right,
But some one's here to teach it, day and night;
No soothing balm soul may from soul demand,
But some one has it ready to his hand!

And then the churches—thick and rich of yield,
As corn-shocks in a new-made prairie field,
Where any one the golden fruit can find
All ready cooked to suit his heart and mind;
Great brick-and-mortar prayers! that never cease,
And costing fifty good-sized farms apiece
(Much too expensive, it might well be said,
If *bodies only* need be clothed and fed).

And then the missions—regular district schools,
Where transient men are taught eternal rules;
Then the Salvation Army girls and boys,
Who season their religion up with noise,
And, when they get to Heaven, won't have the power
To help keep silent even half an hour;
But who take ragged wretches every day,
Haul them into the straight and narrow way,
Strip them of vain conceit soon as they show it,
And get them saved—almost before they know it!
It's something good to make these people good,
Who never go to church, and never would!

God bless each woman, man, and child, I say,
That leads His creatures in the heavenly way,

Whether they work by still, old-fashioned means,
Or march with drums and flags and tambourines!

Then there's those men who've crept and crawled as low
As even Satan cared to have them go;
Have marched through strong iron doors in striped ranks,
Have toiled where convict labor whirls and clanks,
Have made hard beds in cramped and lonely cells,
Have sinned their way through several different hells;
Whose lives have been so terribly amiss
To ever find worse worlds than they've made this;
Then groped out into Virtue's bath and sun,
And been washed up as clean as any one,
And warmed up with sweet sunlight from above;
Till they themselves start off on deeds of love,
And say to men with scarred and crime-flushed brow,
"I've been as bad, or worse, than you are now."
Whereat the wretch says, with dull, shadowy bliss,
"What! can there be some square way out of this?"
And maybe brings to pass, through Virtue's schemes,
Some of his poor old mother's fondest dreams!

Oh you who shout or sing or chant or read—
Whatever be your name or style or creed—
If any one on earth a plan has got
(Whether it's half as good as yours or not)
To find a gate into the narrow way,
And let in others that have gone astray—
If there's a single chance to mortals given
By which to slip poor mortals into Heaven,
For Heaven's sake do not frown in righteous wrath,
Or throw a scornful word into their path!
But *interfere with help* in their affairs,
And push them with your money and your prayers!
For Pain is Pain, and God to see it loath,
In this strange world and in the next one, both;
And he who saves his fellow-men from pain,
Is God's hired man, and does not toil in vain?

But I'm reminded, by the bell for dinner,
That I'm no preacher, but a poor old sinner,
Unable even to follow my own view,
Much less to counsel others how to do.
I can't even eat—when I come right down to it,
Without a bell to tell me when to do it.
So I will cork my sermon, snub my muse,
And go down-stairs with Wife, and learn the news.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

[MORE WAYS THAN ONE.]

I was present, one day,
  Where both layman and priest
Worshipped God in a way
  That was startling, at least:
Over thirty in place
  On the stage, in a row,
As is often the case
  At a minstrelsy show;
In a uniform clad
  Was each one of them seen,
And a banjo they had,
  And a loud tambourine.
And they sung and they shouted
  Their spasmodic joys,
Just as if they ne'er doubted
  That God loved a noise.

And their phrases, though all
  Not deficient in points,
A grammarian would call
  Rather weak in the joints;

And the aspirate sound
  Was adroitly misused,
And The Language all round,
  Was assaulted and bruised;
While the tunes that they sung
  In bewildering throngs,
Had been married, when young,
  To hilarious songs;
And the folks in that place,
  Who this loud racket made,
Were not bounded by race
  Or condition or shade.

Now I love my own meeting,
  My own cosy pew,
While mentally greeting
  Friends quietly true;
And the Gospel dispensed
  With a dignified grace,
Born of reason clear-sensed
  And a faith firm of place.
I love the trained voices
  That float down the aisles,
Till the whole church rejoices
  With God's sweetest smiles.
Have no sneer understood
  For the rest, when I say
I had rather get good
  In a civilized way.

So this meeting had grated
  Somewhat on my heart,
And ere long I had waited,
  I thought to depart.
But a young man arose,
  Looking sin-drenched and grim,
As if rain-storms of woes
  Had descended on him;

No such face you'd discern
  In a leisurely search,
If you took a chance turn
  Through a civilized church;
But his words, though not choice,
  To my feelings came nigh;
There was growth in his voice,
  There was hope in his eye.

And he said, "I'm a lad
  With a life full of blame;
Every step has been bad,
  Every hour was a shame.
And for drink I would pawn
  All within my control,
From the clothes I had on,
  To my heart and my soul.
I have drank the foul stuff
  In my parents' hot tears;
I have done crime enough
  For a hundred black years;
But I came to this place
  For the help that I craved;
I have seen Jesus's face,
  And I know I am saved."

Then a man rose to view,
  When this youngster was done,
And he said, "This is true;
  That young man is my son.
He was drunk every day,
  And such terror would make,
That I spurned him away
  From my house, like a snake.
We have suffered the worst
  That can come from heart-fears;
He is sober the first
  I have seen him for years.

I am full of such joy
  As I never yet knew;
And now, Robert, my boy,
  Home is open to you!

"You may go home with me—
  Or may run on before;
You've a glittering key
  That will open the door!
Your mother is there,
  Praying for you e'en now;
There is snow in her hair,
  There is pain on her brow.
And when you have kissed her
  The old-fashioned way,
There's a brother and sister
  Who've longed for this day;
And whate'er can befriend you
  On earth, shall be done;
May God's blessing attend you,
  My son—oh, my son!"

Then the banjo struck in,
  And the tambourine jingled;
There rose such a din
  That my blood fairly tingled.
The vocalists screamed
  Till quite red in the face;
But somehow it all seemed
  Not at all out of place!
Now denouements immense
  Do not somehow take hold,
Or dramatic events
  Reach my heart, as of old;
But my smiles could not hide
  The fast-gathering tears,
And I cheered, laughed, and cried,
  As I had not for years!

And I thought, "Not amiss
  Are this tumult and shout:
Folks who save men like this
  Know what they are about.
You who fight with God's sword
  For the good of your kind—
You can never afford
  To leave these men behind.
If these women I've seen,
  Should be pelted or cursed,
I would step in between—
  I would take the blow first.
They who draw souls above
  From the depths lowest down,
Will not fail of God's love
  Or to shine in His crown."

THE SALVATION ARMY.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

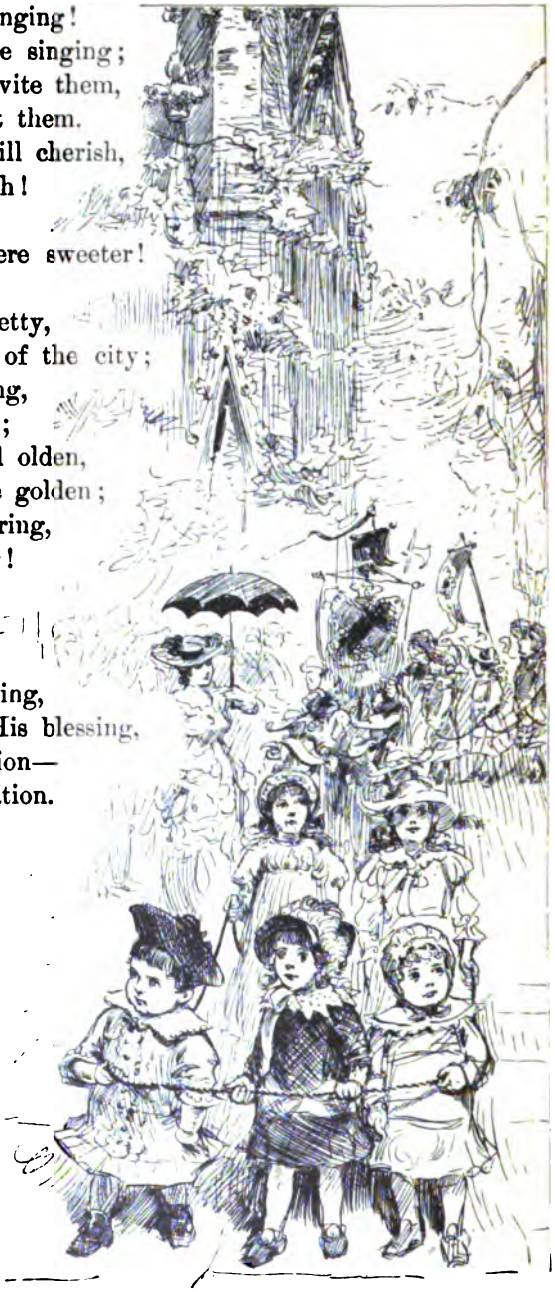
[THE MARCH OF THE CHILDREN.]

List to the sound of the drumming!
Gaily the children are coming;
Sweet as the smile of a fairy,
Fresh as the blossoms they carry.
Pride of the parents who love them,
Pure as the azure above them,
Free as the winds that caress them,
Bright as the sunbeams that bless them.

List to the voice-echoes ringing!
Sweeter than birds they are singing;
Thoughts that to virtue invite them,
Wed unto airs that delight them.
Truths that their future will cherish,
Soul-planted, never to perish!
Only to senses completer,
Heaven's choicest music were sweeter!

Virtue, unconscious and pretty,
Walks through the streets of the city;
See the gay bannerets flying,
Mottoes and titles undying;
Truths dearly hallowed and olden,
Braided in strands that are golden;
Words for the spirit's desiring,
Sentences sweetly inspiring!

When, in a voice of caressing,
Christ gave the children His blessing,
'Twas not for one generation—
But for each epoch and nation.
So through the present it
lingers,
Shed from His bountiful
fingers;
So unto these it is given—
Types of the angels in
Heaven.



TRAVEL.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

NOVEMBER 1, 18—.

IT'S quite the thing to "travel" nowadays
(Although I do not think it *always* pays),
And see if distant ground in general looks
As mentioned in the papers and in books.
I find, in sifting what few facts I know,
Three ways of realizing things are so:
First, when you're told them in such trusty shape
That square belief isn't easy to escape.
(There's lots of people—this town wouldn't hold them—
Who don't know much excepting what is told them.)
Second, what you've put on some mental shelf,
By having seen and understood yourself.
(How well we know things witnessed, largely lies
On how much brain there is behind our eyes.)
The third way is the surest and the best
(Though sometimes painful, it must be confessed):
It's where a truth has whipped the earth with you,
Until you *feel*, from head to foot, 'tis true.
I think, sometimes, when all is said and done,
Feeling is all the senses joined in one.

We're going to travel!—not so very far
As our new friends, the Fitzcumnoodles, are,
Who cannot read their social titles clear
Unless they ride twelve thousand miles a year,

(I told them, with a philosophic smile,
That travelling shouldn't be measured by the mile.)
But we shall take a little trip, to-morrow,
With some spare time that wife's contrived to borrow,
To where George Washington laid out a town
That several centuries won't see tumbled down!
A city which, with all the sneaking sinners
That come down there to steal their daily dinners,
And all the human insects hovering nigh,
Such as swarm thick wherever good things lie,
And spite of all the bad weeds growing round,
Has always *some* good folks upon the ground,
And will be head-piece of the greatest nation
That ever helped spruce up the Lord's plantation.

The Fitzcumnoodles, through their daughter Maud,
Inform us that we ought to go abroad;
The Clancdenancies, we have lately learned,
From an extended trip have just returned;
And so my eldest daughter, Isabel,
Who knows Miss Clanc, etc., very well,
Called on her in the progress of a walk,
And had a pleasant little travel-talk;
And after coming home misspent her time
In putting what she heard there into rhyme,
And—lost it—not by accident, I fear;
I'll paste the "conversation" right in here:

HER TOUR.

Yes, we've been travelling, my dear,
  Three months, or such a matter,
And it's a blessing to get clear
  Of all the clash and clatter!
Ah! when I look the guide-book through,
  And see each queer place in there,
'Tis hard to make it seem quite true
  That I myself have been there!

Our voyage? Oh, of course 'twas gay—
  Delightful! splendid! glorious!
We spurned the shore—we sped away—
  We rode the waves victorious.
The first mate's mustache was so grand!
  The ocean sweet, though stormy
(I was so sick I could not stand,
  But papa saw it for me).

At Queenstown we saw land once more—
  Ground never looked so pretty!
We took a steam-car near the shore
  For some light-sounding city.
A very ordinary stone
  We had to kiss at Blarney;
The beggars wouldn't let us alone
  That half-day at Killarney!

The Giants' Causeway? 'Tis arranged
  With no regard to science;
It must somehow of late have changed—
  At least we saw no giants.
Some little funny scrubs of folks
  Sold pictures, and were merry;
The men were full of yarns and jokes,
  The women barefoot—very.

Old Scotland? Yes, all in our power
  We did there to be thorough;
We stopped in Glasgow one whole hour,
  Then straight to "Edin*borough*."
At Abbotsford we made a stay
  Of half an hour precisely.
(The ruins all along the way
  Were ruined very nicely.)

We "did" a mountain in the rain,
  And left the others undone,
Then took the "Flying Scotchman" train,
  And came by night to London.

Long tunnels somewhere on the line
  Made sound and darkness deeper;
No; English scenery is not fine,
  Viewed from a Pullman sleeper.

Oh, Paris! Paris! Paris! 'tis
  No wonder, dear, that you go
So far into the ecstasies
  About that Victor Hugo!
He paints the city, high and low,
  With faithful pen and ready
(I think, my dear, I ought to know—
  We drove there two hours steady).

Through Switzerland by train. Yes, I
  Enjoyed it, in a measure;
But still the mountains are too high
  To see with any pleasure.
Their tops—they made my neck quite stiff,
  Just stretching up to view them;
And folks are very foolish if
  They clamber clear up to them!

Rome, Venice, Naples, and the Rhine?
  We did them—do not doubt it;
This guide-book here is very fine—
  'Twill tell you all about it.
We've saved up Asia till next year,
  If business gets unravelled;
What! going? Come again; and, dear,
  I will not seem so travelled.

WASHINGTON, *November* 3, 18—

We're travelling, and we're here! and what a town!
I own, it picks me up and sets me down!

I thought I had some idea of the place,
And what its corporation lines embrace;
I'd read the county papers every week,
Which seldom failed "From Washington" to speak;
I'd travelled through these streets by photograph,
And, with Imagination for a staff,
Had wandered round, in little trips disjointed,
Even where the artist's brass gun has not pointed;
And so I said, "Though I wouldn't like to miss it,
'Twill be a good deal like a second visit."

But 'tisn't an easy perpetrated scheme
To prophesy how anything will seem.
This city's new to me—I do not doubt it—
As if I'd never heard a word about it!
There's something in these white-clothed buildings' glare,
And something even in the very air,
And in the great variety of faces,
Bearing the ear-marks of a thousand places,
And in that monument that reaches high—
The farthest stone has climbed into the sky,
And in that dome, whose kingly size and height
Contrive, where'er you are, to keep in sight—
From these, and several hundred other things
This nation's lead-horse city at you flings,
You feel as if you'd stepped, through many a mile,
Into another planet for a while!

But men too weary to hold up their heads
Are apt to bless the man* who first made beds;
Then, having found one, and reclined within it,
Forget about him in just half a minute.
So I'll let Morpheus (who is at me winking)
Do the remainder of this evening's thinking.

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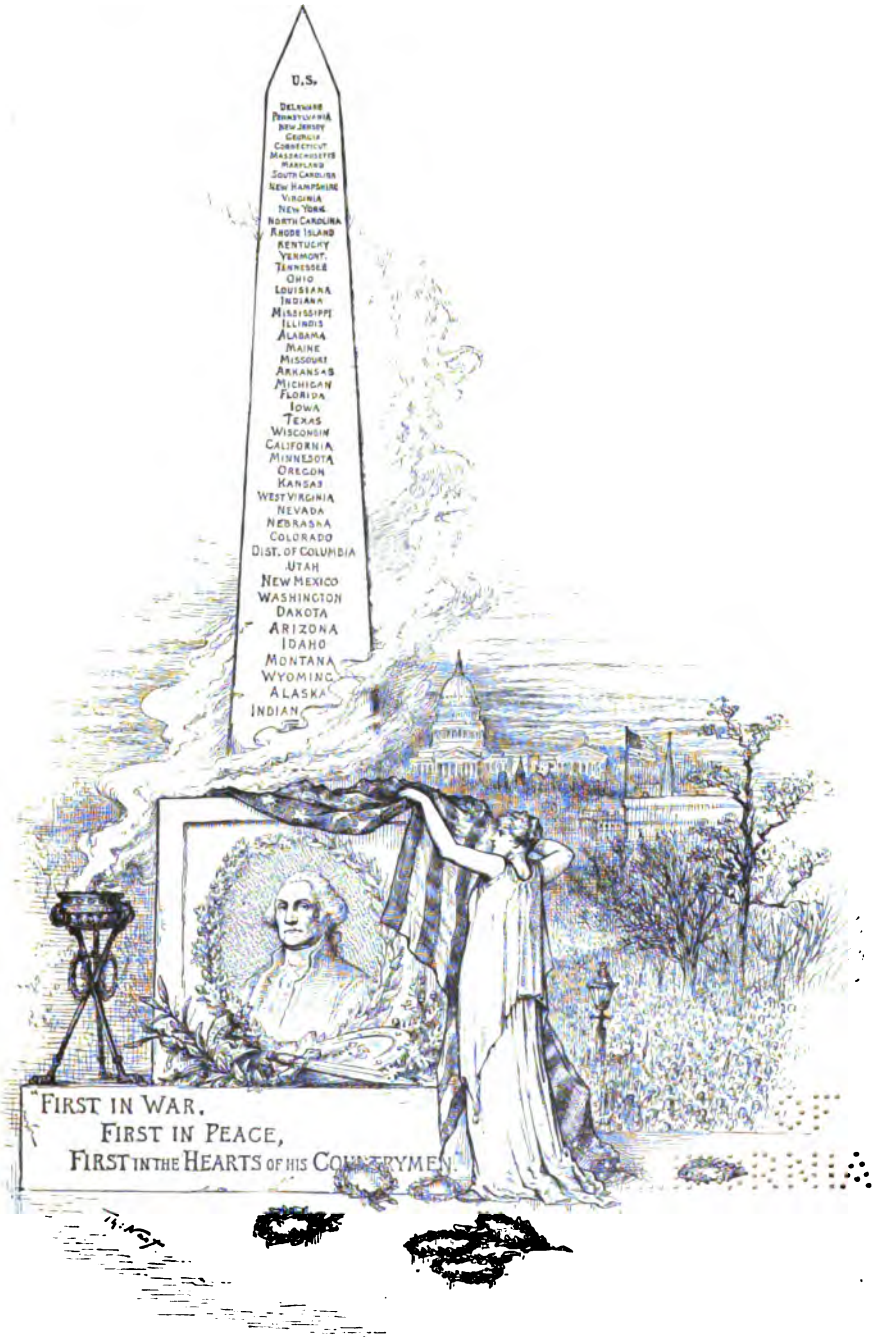
* Or woman—let due praise to her be paid;
A bed is never made until 'tis *made*.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

AT THE SUMMIT OF THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT.

Look North! A white-clad city fills
This valley to its sloping hills;
Here gleams the modest house of white,
The statesman's longed-for, dizzy height.
Beyond, a pledge of love to one
Who in two lands was Freedom's son—
The holder of an endless debt—
Our nation's brother, Lafayette.
But yonder lines of costly homes
And bristling spires and swelling domes,
And far away the spreading farms
Where thrift displays substantial charms,
And hamlets creeping out of sight,
And cities full of wealth and might,
Must own the fatherhood of him
Whose glory Time can never dim.
All who can reckon Freedom's worth
Would write across this whole broad earth,
With pen dipped in the golden sun,
The magic name of Washington!
If we can keep the rules he gave
This land he more than fought to save,
Our future fame will glisten forth
Grand as the winter-lighted North!

Look South!—where, in its coat of gray,
The broad Potomac creeps away,
And seeks the blue of distant skies;
But pauses where the great chief lies
Within his humble, hallowed tomb,
Amid Mount Vernon's deathless bloom.
As glides this stream, great corse, past thee,
First to the bay, and then the sea,



FROM THE MONUMENT.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

So flowed thy life to rural rest,
Ere thou wast Heaven's eternal guest.
Oh strong, high man! whose patriot heart
Climbed from all common greeds apart;
To whom men's selfish ways were small,
As from this tower, serenely tall
(Built that all years thy fame may know),
Men look while creeping there below!
How weak was power to thy clear gaze,
Builder of nations joined in one,
Kindler of splendors still to blaze,
Finder of glories just begun!
Live on, great sleeper! as this stone,
Highest from earth that man has known,
So shall be ranked thy solid worth,
Highest of heroes on the earth!
Happy, secure, and cherished name,
Love is the pillar of thy fame;
Thy praise comes from each patriot's mouth,
Warm as the sunbeams of the South!

Look East! The Nation's castle walls
Spread out in massive beauty now;
Their lofty dome and pictured halls
In homage to this summit bow.
Oh, well that from these palaced lands
The marble spire obeisance win;
But for the one for whom it stands,
This chieftain-town had never been!
Yon plot, so full of brain and will,
Had staid a bleak and lonely hill!
If at five thousand dizzy feet
This shaft the whirling clouds could meet,
Until our gaze for miles, might be,
To the uncrowned but royal sea,
'Twere not too much of honor then,
To grant our crownless king of men.

You who the Nation's laws indite,
Look to this summit's honest white,
Where, throned on walls that must endure,
Pure fame entreats you to be pure;
Until our glory be increased,
Like sunbeams from the dazzling East!

Look West! There lie the hilly fields
Where brothers fought through days of dread,
Where mothers brooded o'er their dead,
And soil the thrift of carnage yields;
Where cannon roared and bullets sung,
Till every hillock had a tongue.
O Nation being and to be,
That silent blood speaks loud to thee!
God grant, if e'er our guns again
Must tear the quivering flesh of men,
The leaden hail-storm may be pressed
Against some foul invader's breast—
Against some alien tribe and zone—
And not, as then, to kill our own!
May all the fruitful strifes of peace
The thrilling bonds of love increase;
May yonder orb, in his quick change
From mountain range to mountain range,
From valley to rich valley o'er,
From river shore to river shore,
From wave to wave—may yonder sun
One Nation count, and only one;
Until he dips his fiery crest
Into the ocean of the West!

Look up! The phantom clouds of gray—
Grim ghosts of storm—have passed away;
The veiling of the sky is done,
And downward shines the welcome sun.

He kindles grand and peaceful fires
Upon the city's domes and spires;
He sends his strong magnetic glow
Through yonder moving throngs below.
Thou art, O sky serene and clear,
A symbol of our country here!
What land in all this world of pain,
This earth, where millions toil in vain,
Where famine, pestilence, and strife
Play careless games with human life,
Where Superstition clouds the soul,
And heartless brains sad hearts control—
What country, framed in frost or flowers,
Can see so clear a sky as ours?
Peace throws her mantle, broad and free,
O'er all who peaceable will be;
Plenty her sheltering flag doth wave
O'er those who will but toil and save;
Enlightenment each day shall rise
For all who do not cloud their eyes;
While Liberty from every race
Has made this land a refuge-place.
Let our deep thanks forever fly
Far as the reaches of the sky!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Note-book.*]

NOVEMBER 5, 18—.

Went to Mount Vernon; and I wouldn't have lost
That trip, for fifteen hundred times its cost!
Those farm-lands sleeping in the autumn sun;
The house HE slept in when his work was done;
The trees he planted with his own brave hand,
That set out Freedom's trees all o'er the land:
The humble tomb he lies in, which—like me—
Pilgrims from all the world have come to see:
These look up in one's eyes and sadly smile,
And preach a funeral sermon all the while!

Even the river-boats upon their way
Toll bells, as if he'd died that very day!
And through it all this precept may be traced:
The noblest men are simplest in their taste.

I've read how grand, Napoleon's tomb is made,
And all the surface-honors to him paid;
But I don't think the people that come there
Bring any heartfelt sympathy to spare;
While every true-brained patriot, night and morn,
Thanks God for letting Washington be born!

While I was standing, hat off, at the tomb,
A youth approached, three-quarters made of bloom;
And with his hat perched on his close-sheared head,
And smoking a small white cigar, he said:
"Sirrh, would you kindly just enlighten me
As to where Gawge cut down the cherry-tree?"
Said I, "Young man, just please at once disgorge
The fool-idea of calling that man 'George;'
His body, mind, and soul were firmly set
Higher, no doubt, than you will ever get.
He isn't the man, though lying dead, 'tis true,
When friends are near, to be half-named by you.
Take off your hat, and bow; if you rebel,
I'll get a cherry switch and trounce you well."

He looked at me a moment in surprise,
And mutiny stood foremost in his eyes;
But I was quite indignant, and could feel
The blood of Bunker Hill all through me steal.
I said, "One minute more will be allowed;"
The fine young man took off his hat, and bowed.

Irreverence is the fashion, nowadays,
And shows itself in good and evil ways;
Its mission is legitimate and clear
In cases where there's nothing to revere;

But they who use it must be judgment-fixed,
And not get reverend and unreverend *mixed.*

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Through these broad streets do I fly—
Furlongs and miles I defy,
Till the "magnificent distance"
Vanishes out of existence.
Let me with pencil prolong
Strains of the Bicycler's Song:

[THE SILENT WHEEL.]

Good-morning, good Pedestrian—I'm glad to see you out;
The day is full of healthfulness, the birds are all about;
There is a quiet breeziness in all the pleasant air—
I hope this happy exercise will drive away your care.
For I am a pedestrian—
A very good pedestrian—
And all the glowing benefit of walking I can share;
Although I tread the atmosphere, and do not touch the ground,
I greet you as a brother, sir, wherever you are bound.
But my impatient lady-love in yonder town doth wait;
I wish you better company, and strike a swifter gait.

Good-morning, good Equestrian—a noble steed you ride;
I do not seem to frighten him, so here is by your side.
It is a feast of happiness to smoothly bound along,
With sturdy muscles under you, and footing swift and strong.
For I am an equestrian—
A very fair equestrian—
With bugle blast of melody and unassuming song;
And all the thrilling ecstacy of horsemanship I feel,
Although the nag I ride upon was bred of burnished steel.
But his impatience urges me to swifter gait than you,
And so I wish you pleasure, sir, and bid a kind adieu.

Good-morning, Mr. Racer, you've a trotter that is fine;
I never would disparage him, or say too much of mine;
Your horse is full of mettle, sir, and bravely draws his load;
It must be pure deliciousness to speed him on the road.
But I am quite a racing man—
A modest, humble racing man—
Though small is my solicitude upon the turf bestowed;
And if you have anxiety to try a little race,
I'll undertake, with courtesy, to give you second place;
But if the first you take from me, and it be fairly earned,
I'll hope that on some future day the tables may be turned.

Good-morning, Mr. Carriageer, you have an easy ride;
Those cushions are luxurious, and pleasantly you glide!
'Tis very good and fortunate, if one be tired or ill,
To calmly call his carriage out, and travel as he will.
But I, sir, keep my carriage, too—
A very pleasant carriage, too—
Though it is not the easy one that *your* desire would fill;
It carries me in comfort over many a pleasant mile,
And all my best acquaintances are suited with its style.
'Tis with a blithe economy establishments are run,
With driver, footman, passenger, and horses—all in one!

Good-morning, fellow Wheelmen; here's a warm, fraternal hand,
As with a rush of victory we sweep across the land!
If some may be dissatisfied to view the way we ride,
We only wish their majesties could wander by our side!
For we are good philanthropists—
Unqualified philanthropists—
And would not have *our* happiness to any one denied.
We claim a great utility that daily must increase;
We claim for inactivity a bright and grand release;
A constant mental, physical, and moral help we feel,
Which makes us turn enthusiasts, and bless the silent wheel!

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

NOVEMBER 20, 18—.

It's quite a show, and strikes me a good deal—
How many ride around here on a wheel;
The streets are graded very smooth and nice,
And make this town the wheelman's paradise.
A brother-farmer—neighbor, once, to me—
Who's down here, like myself, to hear and see,
Told me, last night, before we "doused the glim,"
How a young wheel-chap got the start of him.
'Twould skip my memory, maybe, if I'd let it;
I'll put it down here so I sha'n't forget it.

[FARMER AND WHEEL; OR, THE NEW LOCHINVAR.]

I.

I was hoein' in my corn-field, on a spring day, just at noon,
An' a hearkin' in my stomach for the dinner-trumpet's tune,
An' reflectin', when my daughter should be married, 'twould be best
She should take Josiah Baker's son, who jines me on the west,
An' consolidate our acres into one immense abode,
When my hired man says, "By ginger, look a-yender down the road!"

"Well," I says, "my goodness gracious! things *is* rather overgrown,
When a buggy-wheel gets loosened, an' goes runnin' 'round alone."
But my man he says, "By mustard!" (as the critter nearer came)
"Don't you see that there's a feller on a-straddle of the same?"
An' it *was* as nice a shaver as you'd see 'most any day,
Who was travellin' through the country in that onexpected way.

He was rather young an' han'some, an' as smilin' as you please,
An' his pants they signed a contract with his stockin's at the knees;
An' he had a pair o' treadles some'at underneath his seat,
So's to run the queer contraption, by a-workin' of his feet;
An' the sun descended on it, in a manner warm an' bright;
'Twas as sing'lar as a circus, an' an interestin' sight.

When, as fate was bound to have it, on that quite partic'lar morn,
There was somethin' was the matter with my folks's dinner-horn;
An' the hired girl, when she tried to, couldn't blow it very well,
For to call us in to dinner—so she sent my daughter Belle:
Who came up just at that minute—nice a girl as could be found;
An' this fellow looked her over, an' came smashin' to the ground.

Smash to bang he came a-floppin'—wheel an' stockin's, pants an' all;
An' I run to him, remarkin', "You have caught a dreadful fall."
An' my daughter hovered round him, tremblin' with her she alarms,
Lookin' just as if she would like to some'at take him in her arms;
But he glanced up, faintly smilin', an' he gaspin'ly replied,
"I am only hurt intern'lly" (which I s'pose he meant inside).

An' we packed him on the stone-boat, an' then drove him to the house,
An' he lay there on the sofa, still an' quiet as a mouse;
An' he would not have a doctor; but he called my daughter Belle,
An' then laughed an' chatted with her, like a person gettin' well;
An' along late in the evenin', I suppose, he went away;
For he wasn't there next mornin', an' Belle hadn't a word to say.

An' he left two silver dollars in an easy-noticed spot,
For to pay us for his passage on the stone-boat, like as not;
An' 'twas quite enough equivalent for his transitory stay;
But whate'er he might have left us, still he carried more away;
For my daughter Belle grew absent, glanced at every sound she heard,
And Josiah Baker junior couldn't get a civil word.

II.

I was workin' in my meadow, on a blazin' summer's day,
When my son-in-law by contract came a-runnin' 'cross the way,
An' remarked, "It's been the bargain—for how long I needn't tell—
That these two farms should be married—as should also me an' Belle;
An' how much the indications indicate that that'll be,
If you'll come down here a minute, you will have a chance to see."

An' he led me 'cross the fallow, underneath some picnic trees,
Where my gal an' that wheel fellow sat as cosy as you please;

"AND HE STOOD THERE, LIKE A COLONEL, WITH HER TREMBLING ON HIS ARM."

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

An' she'd put some flowers an' ribbons on the wheel, to make a show,
An' they'd been a-shakin' hands there, an' forgotten to let go;
An' she sort o' made a chair-back of the fellow's other arm,
With no 'parent recollection of Josiah Baker's farm.

Then we walked around front of 'em, an' I says, "Your very fine;
But this gal that you are courtin' is Josiah's gal an' mine;
You're a mighty breechy critter, an' are trespassin' all round;
Why, this very grove you sit in is Josiah's father's ground."
Then he rose up, stiff an' civil, an' helped Belle across the stile,
Also put the masheen over, with a queer but quiet smile;

An' he stood there, like a colonel, with her tremblin' on his arm,
An' remarked, "I beg your pardon, if I've done you any harm.
But so far as 'trespass' matters, I've relieved you of that load,
Since the place I now am standing is, I think, the public road.
And this very sweet young lady, you in one sense yours may call,
But she's mine, sir, in another—and Josiah's not at all.

"I'll escort this lady home, sir, leave my wheel here in your care,
And come back in fifteen minutes to arrange the whole affair.
And please do not touch the 'cycle'—'tis as yet without a flaw,
And I do not want a quarrel with my future father-in-law;
If this Mr. Baker junior follows up his glances, though,
With his fingers, I will thrash him till he thinks his cake is dough."

Then he left us both suspectin' that he'd rather got the start,
An' the acres of the daddies seemed increasin'ly apart;
An' we didn't wait to see him; but, with one impatient jerk,
We shook our heads in concert, an' went back unto our work;
An' I couldn't help reflectin'—"He is steady like, an' cool,
An' that wheel may be a folly, but it didn't bring a fool."

III.

I was on my stoop a-restin', on a hazy autumn day,
Rather drowsy from a dinner that had just been stowed away,
And regrettin'—when old Baker's an' my homestead jined in one,
That he wasn't to furnish daughter, an' I wasn't to furnish son,

So's to have my name continued, 'stead of letting it go down,
When Josiah Baker junior came a drivin' home from town.

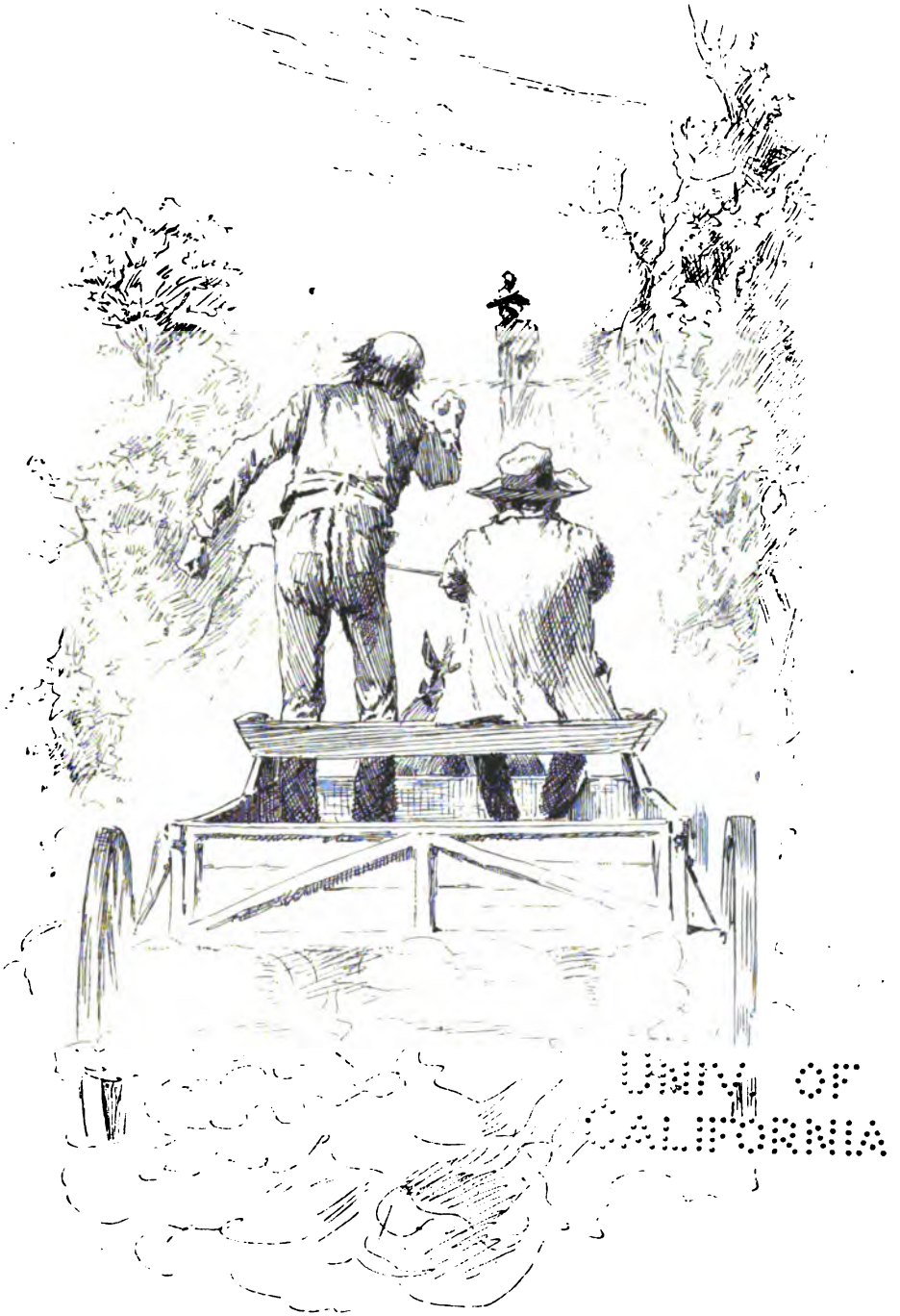
An' a little ways behind him came that wheel scamp, ridin' hard,
An' they both to once alighted, an' come walkin' through the yard;
When, as fate was bound to have it, also came my daughter Belle,
From a visit in some neighbor's, lookin' very sweet an' well;
An' they stood there all together—that 'ere strange, dissimilar three,
An' remained in one position—lookin' steady down at me.

Then Josiah spoke up loudly, in a kind o' sudden pet,
"If this gal an' I's to marry, it is time the day was set;
For that one-wheel feller's always 'round here courtin', on the fly,
An' they say she rides out with him, in the night-time, on the sly.
Father'll give us board an' victuals, you can give her land an' dower,
Wherefore, if she wants to have me, please to set the day an' hour."

Then the wheel scamp spoke up quiet, but as if the words he meant,
"*I* would like to wed your daughter, an' have come for your consent.
She is very dear to me, sir, when we walk or when we ride,
And, I think, is not unwilling to become my cherished bride.
I can give her love and honor, and I ask of you no dower;
Wherefore, please bestow your blessing; *we* have set the day and hour."

Then I might have told my daughter that *she* now could have the floor,
An' remarked that on this question there should be just one speech more;
But I rendered my decision in a flame of righteous rage,
An' I shouted, "You'd no business for to court or to engage!
This 'ere gal has long been spoke for; an' you'll please to clamber on
Your old hind-wheel of a buggy, an' forevermore be gone!"

Then he picked up Belle quite sudden, an' made swiftly for the gate,
An' I formed a move to stop 'em, but was most perplexin' late;
He had fixed a small side-saddle on his everlastin' wheel,
So that she could ride behind him (clingin' 'round him a good deal);
An' straight down the Beebe turnpike, like a pair o' birds they flew
Towards a preacher's who had married almost every one he knew.



CHASING THE BICYCLE.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

"Stop 'em! head 'em! chase 'em! catch 'em!" I commanded, very vexed;
"They'll be hustlin' off our daughters on a streak o' lightnin', next!"
An' we took Josiah's wagon, an' his old gray spavined mare,
An' proceeded for to chase 'em, with no extra time to spare;
An' Josiah whipped an' shouted, it was such a dismal pinch,
An' kept just so far behind 'em, but we couldn't gain an inch!

Down the turnpike road we rattled; an' some fellows loudly cried,
"Go it, Baker, or you'll lose her! ten to one upon the bride!"
An' I fumed an' yelled an' whistled, an' commanded them to halt,
An' the fact we couldn't catch 'em wasn't Josiah Baker's fault;
But he murmured, "I am makin' father's mare into a wreck,
Just to see my gal a-huggin' round another feller's neck!"

An' they rushed into that preacher's, maybe twenty rods ahead,
An' before I reached the altar all their marriage-vows was said;
An' I smashed in wildly, just as they was lettin' go o' han's,
An' remarked, in tones of sternness, "I hereby forbid the banns!"
While Josiah Baker junior close behind me meekly came,
Sayin', "Were my father present, he would doubtless do the same!"

But they turned to me a-smilin', an' she hangin' on his arm,
An' he said, "I beg your pardon; let Josiah have the farm.
We've accomplished the sweet object for which we so long have striven,
And, as usual in such cases, are prepared to be forgiven."
An' the whole thing seemed so funny, when I thought of it a while,
That I looked 'em both all over, an' then blessed 'em with a smile.

Then Josiah Baker junior took his spavined mare for home,
An' 'twas difficult decidin' which indulged the most in foam;
An' he said, "I'll drive alone, sir, if the same you do not mind;
An' your son an' daughter Wheeler maybe'll take you up behind."
An' he yelled, while disappearin', with a large smile on his mouth,
"I kin git a gal whose father jines my father on the south!"

IV.

I was workin' in my wood-house on a snowy winter day,
An' reflectin' on a letter that had lately come our way,

How that Belle had every blessin' that a married gal could need,
An' had bought her two twin daughters a small-sized velocipede,
When the thought came stealin' through me, "Well, so far as I can see,
In the line of love an' lovin', what's to be is apt to be."

NOVEMBER 21, 18—.

Went into Congress for a little spell,
Where everything seemed going pretty well;
But all through boyhood's easy-moulding day
I'd heard so much of Webster and of Clay,
That, though they had been dead for many a year,
I thought at least by proxy they'd appear.
It was a disappointment, I declare:
Daniel or Henry—neither one was there!

NEW YORK, *January* 1, 18—.

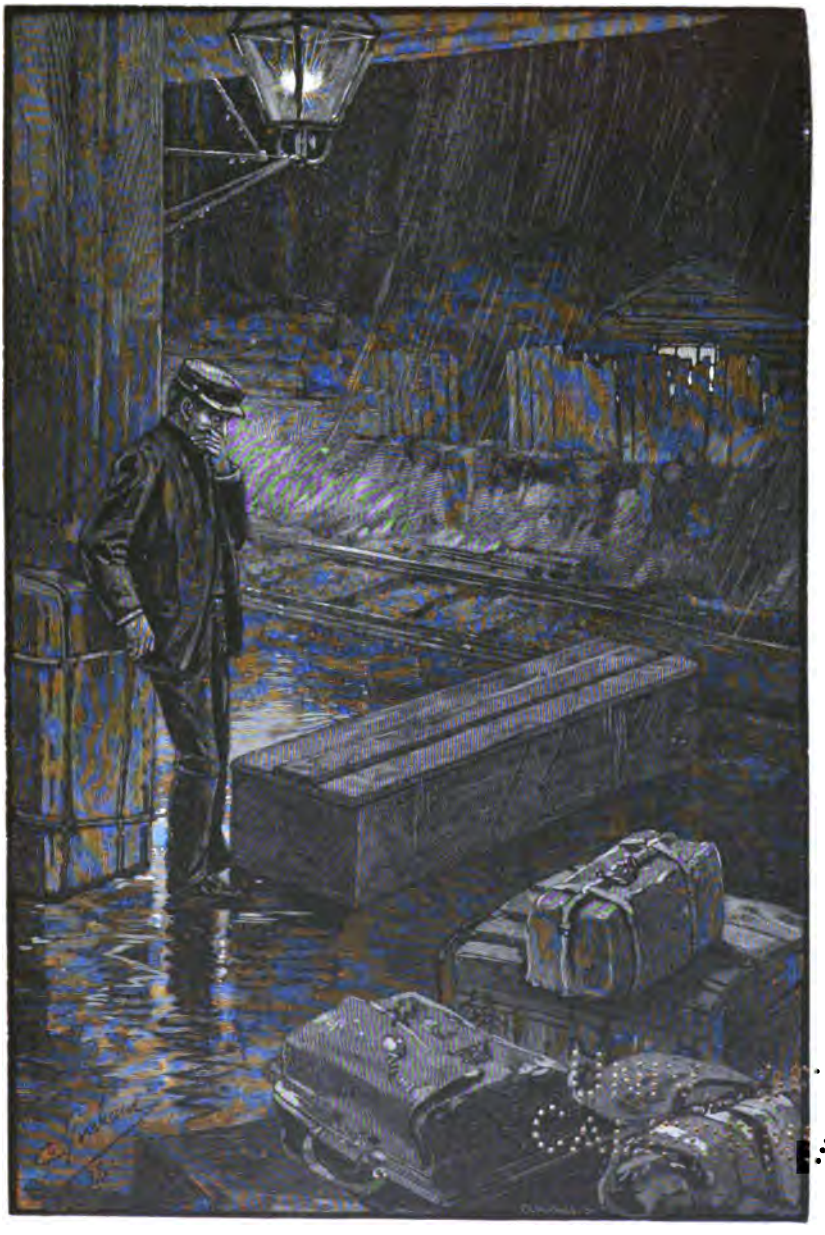
Got back from several cities; and it looks
As if the things we've seen would fill ten books!
Some time I'll write our wanderings to and fro;
It's a large job: I'll have to take it slow.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

[ONLY A BOX.]

Only a box, secure and strong,
Rough, and wooden, and six feet long,
Lying here in the drizzling rain,
Waiting to take the up-bound train.

Only its owner, just inside,
Cold, and livid, and glassy-eyed;



"ONLY A BOX, SECURE AND STRONG,
ROUGH AND WOODEN, AND SIX FEET LONG."

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Little to him if the train be late!
Nothing has he to do but wait.

Only an open grave, somewhere,
Ready to close when he gets there;
Turfs and grasses and flowerets sweet,
Ready to press him 'neath their feet.

Only a band of friends at home,
Waiting to see the traveller come;
Naught he will tell of distant lands;
He cannot even press their hands.

He has no stories weird and bright,
He has no gifts for a child's delight;
He did not come with anything;
He had not even himself to bring.

Yet they will softly him await,
And he will move about in state;
They will give him, when he appears,
Love, and pity, and tender tears.

Only a box, secure and strong,
Rough and wooden, and six feet long;
Angels guide that soulless breast
Into a long and peaceful rest!

HOME.

[*From Farmer Harrington's Calendar.*]

JULY 1, 18—.

BACK to the old, old homestead!—isn't it queer!
But stranger things than that have happened here:
The old farm, after giving oil by stream,
(Until the world itself would almost seem
About to lose its progress smooth and true,
And creak upon its axis, first we knew),
Closed business in the twinkling of an eye,
And every blessèd well we had went dry!
Then all the oil-springs that my neighbors had
The example followed—be it good or bad;
And the whole region round here, high and low,
So full of wealth a few short months ago—
And men, to get their circumstances oiled—
Is now poor farm-land, pretty nearly spoiled!
The little town a mile away from here,
Where we sold eggs and butter many a year,
(And feared the neighbors' hens might over-lay,
And glut the market some sad Saturday),
From a few grown-up folks, a small child-crop,
A church, post-office, store, and blacksmith shop,
This village grew to be, within a year,
A town of fifteen thousand people clear.
It had its banks, its street-cars, and its gas,
And other wonders cities bring to pass;

Its house-yards sold for twice as much, I know,
As my old farm was worth three years ago.
But the town did not grow on brain or soil,
But floated on a hidden sea of oil,
Which ebbed away, one evening, on the sly,
And left "the city" stranded high and dry.
And now the place is crumbling to the gaze—
A modern ruin in these modern days:
No banks, no street-cars, no hotels in town—
The mansions have been burned or taken down.
It shows how soon all greatness is unmade
When once it gets upon the down-hill grade!

So we've come back to take our former farm,
Fix it up somehow, coax back its old charm,
And live here—by the city noise unstirred—
To cogitate on what we've seen and heard
While living in a bustle and a brawl
That sometimes hardly let us think at all.
The old house was kept whole in every part
(I had that put in writing on the start),
And though the farm seems very much as though
An earthquake had lived here a year or so,
We mean to try and make it seem, some week,
More as it did before it sprung a leak.

First thing I said, when home began to fit,
And thus afford us time to breathe a bit:
"We've been out to the city, now, my dear,
Let's bring a small part of the city here.
I'm going, on this very day, to send
For several children such as need a friend,
And have them come out here and get some air,
With room to turn around, and some to spare."

I wrote some men and women in the city,
Who give poor children help, as well as pity,
"Send out as many as you can afford!
And every one shall have a month's clean board,

And carry back, from out our plenteous store,
Enough to keep himself a fortnight more."

The first night that we sat expecting them,
I did what some whole families would condemn--
I moulded up my feelings into rhyme,
In something less than fifteen minutes' time,
Then voiced it to whoever would come near;
I'll put the imposition right in here:

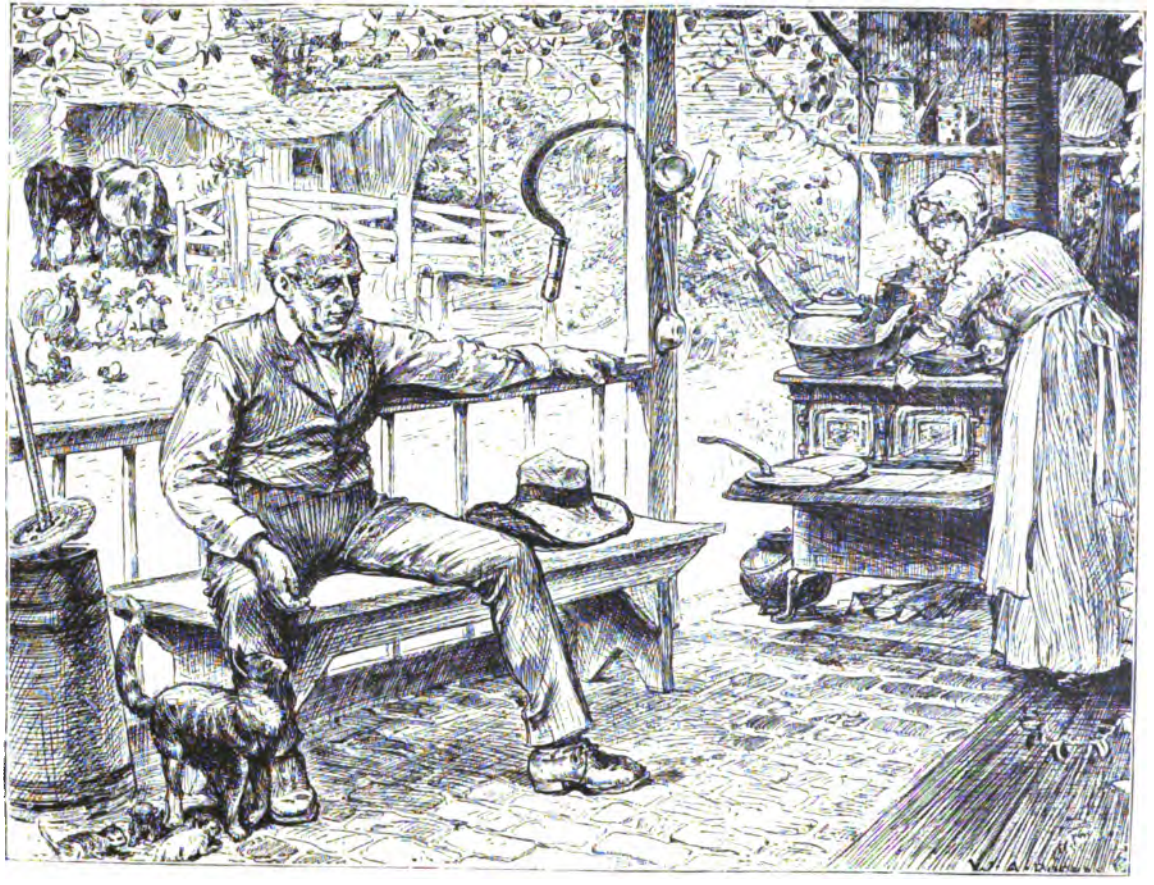
"AND CARRY BACK, FROM OUT OUR PLENTEOUS STORE,
ENOUGH TO KEEP HIMSELF A FORTNIGHT MORE."

[LET THE CLOTH BE WHITE.]

Go set the table, Mary, an' let the cloth be white!
The hungry city children are comin' here to-night;
The children from the city, with features pinched an' spare,
Are comin' here to get a breath of God's untainted air.

They come from out the dungeons where they with want were chained;
From places dark an' dismal, by tears of sorrow stained;
From where a thousand shadows are murdering all the light:
Set well the table, Mary dear, an' let the cloth be white!

They ha' not seen the daisies made for the heart's behoof;
They never heard the rain-drops upon a cottage roof;



"THE HUNGRY CITY CHILDREN ARE COMING HERE TO-NIGHT."

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

They do not know the kisses of zephyr an' of breeze;
They never rambled wild an' free beneath the forest trees.

The food that they ha' eaten was spoiled by others' greeds;
The very air their lungs breathed was full o' poison seeds;
The very air their souls breathed was full o' wrong an' spite:
Go set the table, Mary dear, an' let the cloth be white!

The fragrant water-lilies ha' never smiled at them;
They never picked a wild-flower from off its dewy stem;
They never saw a greensward that they could safely pass
Unless they heeded well the sign that says "Keep off the grass."

God bless the men and women of noble brain an' heart,
Who go down in the folk-swamps an' take the children's part—
Those hungry, cheery children that keep us in their debt,
An' never fail to give us more of pleasure than they get!

Set well the table, Mary; let naught be scant or small;
The little ones are coming; have plenty for 'em all.
There's nothing we should furnish except the very best
To those that Jesus looked upon an' called to him an' blessed.

[*From Arthur Selwyn's Note-book.*]

Oh, Home—restful home! theme of praise and of song!
Where the heart has its refuge, unfailing and strong;
Where the cares of the world sign a partial release,
And the soul can lie down to a sweet sleep of peace!
The mine whence we dig out affection's pure gold,
The fire where we warm our poor hearts when they're cold!
The grand, tender chorus, by love's fingers stirred,
Where all the sweet tones of the soul-life are heard!

But he who in thy praises was sweetest and best—
Who wrote that great song full of soothing and rest—

"Through pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it never so humble, there's no place like home"—
He who, in a moment unfettered by art,
Let that heavenly song fly from the nest of his heart,
He wandered the earth, all forgot and alone,
And ne'er till he died had a home of his own!
He wandered the earth at his own dreary will,
And carried his great heavy heart with him still;
He carried his great heavy heart o'er the road,
With no one to give him a lift with his load;
And wherever he went, with his lone, dreary tread,
He found that his sweet song had flown on ahead!
He heard its grand melodies' chimes o'er and o'er,
From great bands that played at the palace's door;
He heard its soft tones through the cottages creep,
From fond mothers singing their babies to sleep;
But he wandered the earth, all forgot and alone,
And ne'er till in Heaven had a home of his own!

Of course—be it said to the poor fellow's shame—
There was no one on earth but himself he could blame.
God meant, when he made this world cheerful and bright,
Then looked it all over and said 'twas all right,
Then stole Adam's rib while he lay fast asleep,
And when he awoke gave it to him to keep—
He meant that this world, as he gazed on it there,
Should blossom with homes, rich and radiant and fair;
That his chain of love-gold, flung from Heaven's glittering dome,
Should be forged into links, and each link be a home!

This Adam and Eve more advantages carried,
Than any *young* couple that ever was married.
They'd a nice, cozy home, unencumbered and free,
Save a slight reservation on one little tree;

"HE HEARD ITS SOFT TONES THROUGH THE COTTAGES CREEP,
FROM FOND MOTHERS SINGING THEIR BABIES TO SLEEP."

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They toiled not and sweat not in tilling their lands;
Their orchards were trimmed by invisible hands;
They were bothered by no tailors' bills over-due;
Their dress-makers' bills were quite moderate, too;
No tax-ghost each year their scared domicile haunted,
To find out how much more they owned than they wanted;
In sooth this young pair more advantages carried
Than any *young* couple that ever was married!

And if, when Eve spied that large serpent one day,
She had acted the usual feminine way,
And piercingly screamed, and run, reckless and blind,
As if Satan were only two minutes behind,
Then Adam, man-like, had soothed sweetly her fright,
Saying, "What do you fear? 'tisn't poison; 'twon't bite;"
Then, catching a club, he had towered up above it,
And promptly had pounded the devil out of it,
'Twould have saved some hot tears, some hard toil, some disgrace,
And been a great thing for the whole human race.
But they treated him kindly, and gave him his say,
And 'twas not very long ere himself was to pay.

Since then this same Satan, whatever befalls,
Is noted for making his family calls;
Some families—shame on the impudent wretch!—
He stays with at times for a week at a stretch;
And some it would seem as if, pleased with the fare,
He had taken his permanent residence there!
But when to his dear friends these visits he makes,
He doesn't always come in the persons of snakes.

So the Science of Home is the chiefest of all:
To ward off these dangers that ever befall;

To beat back these devils of discord and sin,
That always are striving to steal their way in;
To use all the means God hath placed in our sight,
To keep our homes innocent, happy, and bright;
For a home that rejoices in love's saving leaven,
Comes deliciously nigh to the splendors of Heaven!

Still through the city I wander;
Still do I study and ponder;
But with no loneliness round me;
Severed—the black cords that bound me!
No more my spirit is weary;
I have a home, bright and cheery;
Full of love's sweet, saving leaven:
Home is the daughter of Heaven.

THE END.

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